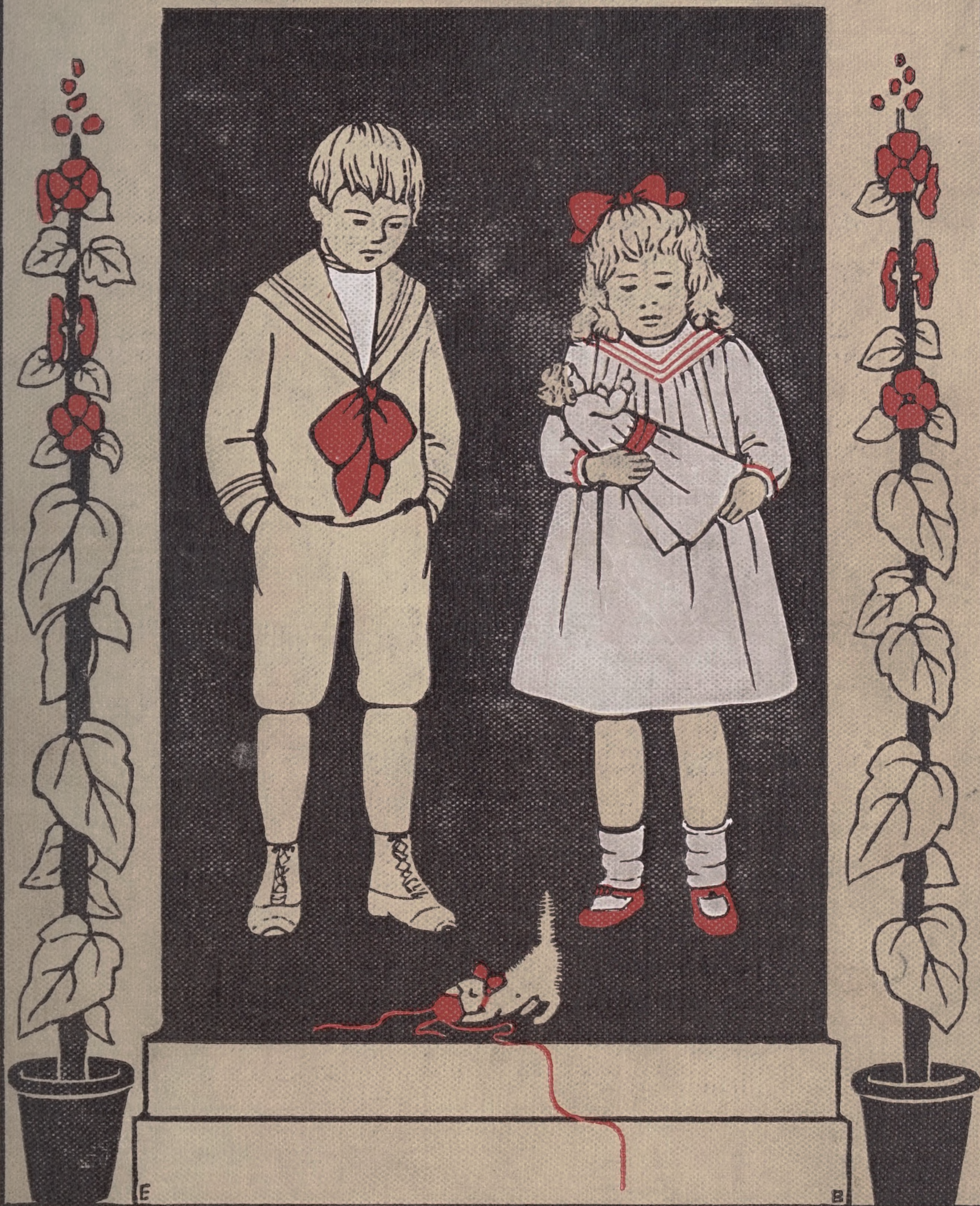


# BROTHERS AND SISTERS



• ABBIE • FARWELL • BROWN •















BROTHERS AND SISTERS













"POOR LITTLE KITTY, HOW COLD SHE MUST BE" (PAGE 6)









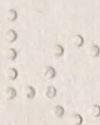


# BROTHERS AND SISTERS

BY

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY  
ETHEL C. BROWN

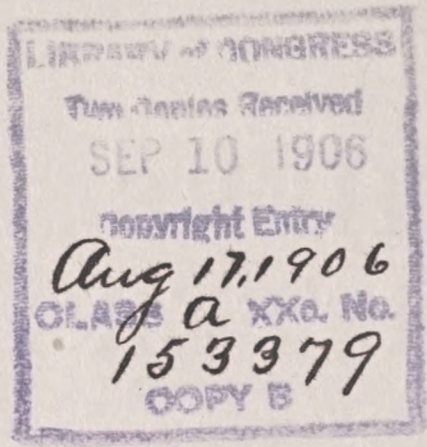


BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

*The Riverside Press, Cambridge*

1906





RZ1  
B 812 B

COPYRIGHT 1906 BY ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*Published September 1906*





FOR permission to reprint the several chapters of this volume thanks are due to *The Churchman*,—"The Garden of Live Flowers," "April Fool," "The Dark Room," "The Pieced Baby," "The Alarm;" to *The Congregationalist*,—"The Japanese Shop," "Brothers and Sisters;" to *Good Housekeeping*,—"Buried Treasure;" and to *The Kindergarten Review*,—"The Christmas Cat."







## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The Christmas Cat	I
II. The Christmas Cat's Present	10
III. The Japanese Shop	19
IV. April Fool's Night	28
V. The April Fool	38
VI. The April-Fool Journey	48
VII. The Dolls' May-Party	57
VIII. The Dark Room	66
IX. The Garden of Live Flowers	86
X. Buried Treasure	97
XI. The Pieced Baby	106
XII. The Alarm	120
XIII. Brothers and Sisters	131
XIV. Tommy's Letter	145







## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

“ Poor little kitty, how cold she must be ” ( <i>page 6</i> )	
	<i>Frontispiece</i> ✓
“ See what Santa has brought the Christmas cat ”	16 ✓
The littlest baby white rabbit	24 ✓
“ I am April Fool ”	40 ✓
Kenneth found that it was a wall of glass	44 ✓
She lifted poor Matilda and set her up on the window seat	64 ✓
In tiptoed a little figure	74 ✓
Living flowers	92 ✓
The sand stretched out like a great sheet of paper	98 ✓
Awakened by a little silvery laugh	108 ✓
They were Tommy and Mary Prout	122 ✓
What a shriek of joy went up	142 ✓







# BROTHERS AND SISTERS

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHRISTMAS CAT

**I**T was the day before the day before Christmas, and there came a big snowstorm, so that Kenneth and Rose were shut up in the house. Now that was a very hard thing to bear, for as every one knows, the last two days before Christmas are the longest, slowest days in the whole year. But if one has to stay in the house and just *think*, it seems as though the time would never go by.

If it had been a pleasant day they could have gone out of doors to skate, or to coast, or to play any number of jolly games which they now remembered sadly. Perhaps they would have gone to their cousin Charlie's house, which was in the next block but one beyond theirs. Perhaps their papa would have taken



them down town for a last look at the Christmas shops, and the wonderful toys, some of which they hoped Santa Claus would remember to bring to the Thornton house. There were ever so many nice things which they could have done to make the time pass away, if only it had been a pleasant day. But now there seemed nothing in the world to do.

Kenneth and Rose wandered dismally about the house. They peeped into the play-room, where the toys were lying about looking very lonely, as though they would say, —

“O Kenneth! Do come and play with us. Please, Rosie, don't go away and leave us all alone!”

But Kenneth and Rose were tired of all the old toys, they had played with them so many, many times. They hoped that Santa would bring them some new ones on Christmas morning, if Christmas morning would ever, ever come!

In the dining-room Rose's old doll, Matilda, was lying face downward on the sofa, quite



heart-broken because she had been so long deserted. Rose looked at her, then she turned her back sadly.

“Matilda is growing very ugly,” she said. “No wonder she hides her face, with only one eye and a broken nose. I still love her very much, but I do so hope that Santa will not forget how much I need a new dollie.”

They went down into the kitchen, with a vague hope that Katie might find them something to do. But Katie was too busy baking the Christmas pies and cake to bother with children. She would not even give them a bit of dough to play with.

“Whisht!” she cried, flapping a dishcloth at them fiercely, “Rin out o’ me kitchen, you childer! I can’t have ye fussing about here this day, niver a bit. Rin off an’ play somewheres else, like a good little lad and lassie, now.”

Run off and play! Where should they run, and what should they play? There was no one to help them. Papa was down town in



spite of all the snow. Kenneth wished that he too was a big man who could go out of doors in spite of all the snow. Mamma was busy in the library with secrets of her own, and would not let them in. Rose wished that she too was a big lady who could have secrets all by herself. Then she would not mind however hard it might storm outside.

Kenneth flattened his nose against one dining-room window, and Rose flattened her nose against the other, and they stared out at the snow smoothly spreading itself over everything, just as Katie was frosting the cake downstairs. Big drifts were piling up beyond the curbstones, and in the doorways opposite. Now and then a sleigh floundered past, the horses making their way with difficulty. Supposing, oh, supposing that it should storm for two whole days, and the snow should grow so deep that even Santa Claus's reindeer could not get through with the gifts for their Christmas stockings!

Suddenly Kenneth jumped right up in the



air and cried, "Look, Rose!" And at the same moment Rose pressed her nose even flatter on the window and said, "O Kenneth, what is it?"

Something tiny and black was moving along through the snow on the sidewalk. It gave little hops, each time sinking down almost out of sight, stopping to rest between jumps as though it were very tired. The children watched it breathlessly.

At last it came to the long flight of steps, which looked like a smooth toboggan-slide of snow. But the little black creature seemed to know what was underneath the cold white covering, for it hopped bravely up on the lowest step, then up and up, step by step, to the landing, where the snow was not so deep. And now the children could see it plainly.

"Why, it's a poor little kitty!" cried Kenneth, almost pushing the glass out of the window with his small, cold nose, so eager was he to watch the little stranger.

"And she has come to our ownty-donty



steps!" echoed Rose. "Poor little kitty, how cold she must be!"

Just at that moment the wet little black thing looked up at the window where Rose stood, and just as if she had heard what Rose said, the poor kitty answered very sadly, "Mi-a-o-ow!"

All this time it had been snowing harder and harder, and already the tracks which the kitty had made in the snow were blotted out of sight. At the same moment Kenneth and Rose made a dash for the front door. "We must n't let the poor kitty stay there," said Kenneth, "she will be all drowned in the snow, and frozen, too."

"Yes, we must bring her in and make her nice and warm," said Rose.

So they opened the front door, and stood at the head of the steps calling, "Kitty, kitty!" very gently, while the snow whirled in about their ankles.

"Mi-a-ow!" answered the black cat, but this time she spoke more cheerfully. "Thank



you!" she seemed to say. "May I really come in?"

"Come in," said Kenneth.

"Poor kitty, do come in!" cried Rose, holding out her hand invitingly. And the black cat walked in.

She was very wet and draggly, but Kenneth took her in his arms and carried her upstairs. Rose ran before, and they knocked on the library door, where their mamma was hidden with her secrets.

"Mamma, Mamma! Come here a minute!" they cried. "Come and see what we have found. Come quick, Mamma!"

In a minute their mamma came hurrying, and opened the door just a tiny little crack, through which she peeped at them. But when she saw what Kenneth had in his arms she came out quickly, shutting the door carefully behind her (to keep the Christmas secrets from running away, I suppose).

"What have you found, Kenneth?" she cried, holding up her hands.



“A kitty, a poor kitty, lost in the snow,” said Kenneth.

“We had to take her in and make her warm and comfy at Christmas time, didn’t we, Mamma?” said Rose.

“Please, Mamma, you will let us keep her, won’t you?” they both pleaded.

Mrs. Thornton hesitated. The cat was very wet and homely. She had meant to give the children a pretty little kitten some day. But just then the poor hungry animal looked up and gave a pitiful “Mi-a-ow,” and Mrs. Thornton remembered how dreadful it was that any living creature should be miserable and cold and homeless at the happy Christmas time.

“Yes, you may keep her, children,” she said. “Keep her and make her have a merry Christmas.”

Kenneth and Rose took the little cat downstairs and gave her a good dinner. “But you shall have a better one on Christmas Day,” promised Kenneth. Rose found a tiny bas-



ket and made a bed beside the fire in the dining-room. And there the black cat slept all the afternoon, she was so tired, and so glad to rest and to be warm. Rose sat beside her, stroking her soft fur, and Kenneth sat at the other side of the fireplace trying to think up a good name for the new kitty, so that the time went before they knew it, and they had forgotten to wish it were Christmas day.

“What have you named the little cat?” asked their papa when the children showed him their new pet that evening.

“Oh, Kenneth has thought of the loveliest name!” cried Rose, jumping up and clapping her hands. “We are going to call her Christine, — because she is a little Christmas cat. Isn’t that a beautiful name, Papa?”

And Papa said that he thought it was a very beautiful name indeed.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CHRISTMAS CAT'S PRESENT

THE next morning when Kenneth and Rose awoke, it was bright and fair. The storm had cleared away, and the whole world was white and wonderful with spangled snow. Now the children could play out of doors as much as they liked, and the time went so fast that they almost forgot to wish Christmas would hurry up. Their cousin Charlie came over to play with them, and they built snow forts and snowballed one another; they made big statues of snow in the back yard and shoveled the sidewalks and the front steps nicely. Before they knew it it was evening again, — Christmas eve, and their mamma was inviting them to come and see her secret in the library.

And what do you think the secret was? When the folding doors were thrown open



there was a glare of light and a smell of woodsy green, and Kenneth and Rose and their cousin Charlie cried "Oh!" they were so surprised. For there stood a beautiful Christmas tree, glittering with spangles and icicles and silver balls and tiny candles.

Kenneth and Rose and Charlie danced around the tree, and they had a beautiful time finding the little bags of candy which were hidden for each of them among the green branches.

"It was a lovely, lovely secret," whispered Rose in her mamma's ear. "And when I grow up I will make one just like it for my dolls."

When all the candles had sputtered and gone out, Charlie's papa came to take him home. And after that it was time to go to bed. But first they must hang up their stockings for Santa Claus to fill. They tied them up over the fireplace in the library, — Kenneth's long black stocking and Rose's shorter brown one. Then Kenneth said, —

"Oh, Mamma, we must hang up a stock-



ing for Christine. I am sure Santa will want to remember the poor little Christmas cat."

"I know!" cried Rose. "I will hang up one of my little summer socks. That will be just right for a little kitty-cat's Christmas."

So she brought one of her short white socks and they hung it up in the chimney-place right between the other two stockings, — between Kenneth's and Rose's. And Christine looked pleased. Then everybody said good-night, and the children went to bed.

It was very, very early in the morning when Kenneth opened his eyes and said out loud, "It is Christmas Day! Oh, at last it is Christmas Day!" Then his eyes opened very wide indeed, and he said nothing at all. The bedposts looked so queer!

Kenneth scrambled over and examined them. On each post at the foot of the bed was a big yellow orange. These were the first signs of Christmas, and they kept Kenneth busy for some minutes. But when he had eaten one of the oranges he could not wait any longer.



He ran to Rose's room and thumped on the door. "Merry Christmas, Rose! Wake up!" he cried, poking in his head. But already Rose was wide awake, and was sitting up in bed eating one of the oranges which had grown on her bedposts, too, during the night.

"Merry Christmas yourself," cried Rose, jumping out of bed. "Let us run and wake up papa and mamma."

So they trotted down the hall to mamma's room and thumped on the door. "Merry Christmas, Mamma! Merry Christmas, Papa!" they cried. "We are going down to look at our stockings and see whether or not Santa really did come last night."

Papa and mamma sighed a little, for they were still very sleepy. But mamma said, "Well, children, you may go down. But first you must put on your clothes, so that you will not take cold. Papa and I will be there in a little while."

Kenneth was dressed first. He ran downstairs to the library, and sure enough! there



hung the three stockings, bulgy and knobby and queer. He shouted up the stairs, "Oh, Rose! Hurry, hurry! He really came, Santa Claus came, and he did not forget even Christine."

In a minute down came Rose, with her shoes half buttoned and her curls all tangled. She could not wait this morning to make everything just right.

They seized their stockings and sat down on the floor to pull out the "plums," like little Jack Horner. In Kenneth's stocking he found a big red apple, and a bag of lovely marbles. Under these was a new game in a box, and a horn of candy. Kenneth dived down lower and found a toy cart, and a top, and a baby camera. At last he reached the toe of the stocking, where there was just one thing left. "I think it is a stick of candy," said Kenneth. But when it came out, it was a jack-knife with four blades. You can imagine how pleased Kenneth was.

As for Rose, what do you suppose she



found in her stocking? She had a red apple, too, and a horn of candy. Then there was a cunning pocket-book, and a little coral necklace in a velvet box. There was a red rubber ball and a harmonica, and away down in the little brown toe of her stocking hid a tiny doll's watch and chain. But the best gift of all poked its head out of the top of her stocking and smiled at her the very first thing. It was a lovely little doll, with yellow curls like Rose's own, and blue eyes, and a white dress with blue ribbons.

"Oh, you dear doll!" cried Rose, hugging her tightly. "I knew that Santa would bring you to me! You are ever so much prettier than Matilda, and I shall call you Alice."

Now Papa and Mamma came down, and they were eager to see what was in Christine's stocking. "Let us take it down to the dining-room where Christine is," said Mamma. "Katie tells me that there are some queer-looking bundles there for you, which Santa could not crowd into your stockings."



With a whoop of joy Kenneth ran down the stairs to the dining-room, and Rose followed as fast as she could, carrying the little white sock with the presents for the Christmas cat. She went up to the basket beside the fire, where Christine lay just as they had left her the night before.

“Oh, Kitty, see what Santa has brought you,” said Rose, holding out the little bulgy stocking. Then she stared hard into the basket where Christine lay. “Oh-h-h! Kenneth!” she cried. “Come here quick! See what Santa has brought the Christmas cat!”

For there, cuddled close up against Christine’s black fur, were two tiny round things mewling with baby voices; one little black kitten, and one as yellow as Rose’s curls, both with their eyes shut tight.

“Well, well!” said papa. “Santa could not get those into Kitty’s stocking, so he brought them here. Is n’t it a lovely present for a little Christmas cat?”

“Of course they both belong to Christine,”





“SEE WHAT SANTA HAS BROUGHT THE CHRISTMAS CAT”







said Kenneth, "but may I not call one of them mine, and the other one Rose's?"

"I want the yellow one," said Rose.

"I like the black one best," said Kenneth, "so that is all right." But Christine licked both the kittens with her pink tongue and purred happily.

"I like them both best, and they are both mine," she seemed to say.

Then the children took out the presents from the little white sock. There was a pretty collar and a bow of ribbon, — yellow, which was Christine's most becoming color. And there was a little bunch of catnip instead of candy. Santa seemed to know just what a little cat would best like. But nothing seemed to please Christine so much as the tiny balls of black and yellow fur in her basket. And the children did not blame her. For indeed, of all their Christmas gifts, — except Alice, the new doll, and Kenneth's jack-knife, — they each liked best the kitten which they had chosen.



“I shall call my kitten Buff,” said Rose, touching the little yellow ball gently.

“And mine shall be Fluff,” said Kenneth, who liked to make rhymes sometimes. “Oh, I am so glad that we took Christine in out of the snow, Rose! For if we had n’t, perhaps Santa would never have thought of leaving us these dear little kittens.”

And I should n’t wonder if Kenneth was right.



## CHAPTER III

### THE JAPANESE SHOP

ONE day, not very long after Christmas, Mrs. Thornton said to Rose, —

“Rose, dear, I am going to the Japanese Shop to buy a wedding present, and I think you would like to go, would n’t you?”

“What is a Japanese Shop?” asked Rose.

“Oh, it is a very wonderful shop,” said her mamma. “I can’t begin to tell you about all the curious things which they sell in a Japanese Shop. You must come and see for yourself.”

So Rose put on her hat and coat and went with her mother to the Japanese Shop. What a wonderful place it was, indeed! Rose felt just as if she were in some strange, new kind of Fairyland, such as she had never before heard about. Everything was colored so bright and beautiful! There were such queer-shaped things sitting about on the floor and standing



up in the corners! Curious lanterns swung from the ceiling, and tall screens of black and gold, with pictures of wonderful long-legged birds flying across, made dark nooks, in which strange bronze animals lurked surprisingly. Everything smelt sweet and rich, too, almost with the Christmas-tree fragrance of mamma's holiday secret.

Rose wandered about by herself while her mother was looking at the funny lamps hiding under colored umbrellas, which she called wedding presents, though Rose did not understand why. They did not interest her like Christmas presents, which were very different. But over in a corner, all by itself, Rose found something which she thought would make the loveliest Christmas present, — the most wonderful Christmas present that any little girl could have. And oh! how she wanted it for her very own!

It was a toy garden; the kind that is put into the guest-room of a Japanese house to amuse visitors.



My ! It was a wonderful little garden, — a real, truly live garden, with growing trees and plants and moss. But it was all so tiny that it could stand on a little table no wider than Rose's arm was long. And though the trees were really, truly grown-up trees, a great deal older than Rose, — older even than her mamma, whom Rose thought very old indeed, — they were no taller than Rose's little hand.

This is the way the garden looked. First, it was almost square and there was a little stone wall all around it, about an inch high. In the middle of the garden was a hill built of rocks, and on the top of the hill was a lawn of green moss, with a tiny pagoda, or Japanese house, no bigger than a match-box. The sides of the hill sloped down, very green and smooth, and at the foot was a little brook of real water, winding around the whole garden. The tiniest path of sand crept zig-zag down the hill to a bit of a red bridge that crossed the brook, for the people in the house at the top of the hill to use. And all along the brook grew little



baby plants, and the wonderful dwarf trees that I told you about. Pine-trees they were, most of them, and the pine needles had fallen on the ground and had turned rusty brown, just as everyday pine needles do. Only these were ten times smaller. Rose wondered who lived in the little house at the top of the hill, and she said to herself: —

“Oh, how I wish I were little enough to live in that dear little house, and play in that sweet little garden, and climb up into those darling little trees! Oh, how I wish I could be littler!” And that was something which Rose had never before wished.

Just then Rose heard a cough behind her, and looking around she saw that the funny Japanese Man who kept the store was standing close at her elbow. He was smiling very pleasantly, so Rose said to him: —

“Oh, Mr. Japanese Man! I think you can tell me who lives in the dear little house and plays in the dear little garden and paddles in the dear little brook. Will you, please?”



The Japanese Man bowed and grinned, and looked at Rose for a minute without saying anything. Then he went away to the other end of the store. Presently he came back, and he had something in his hands. He set a little Somebody down beside the house on the top of the hill; and it was a tiny little old man made of china-stuff, in a long green gown, with a knob of hair on the back of his head, like a lady.

“*He* live in house, litty ol’ man,” said the Japanese. “And these, his animals; live in garden.” As he said this the Japanese Man set down on the bridge the littlest baby white rabbit, and in the brook a tiny-winy duck, which floated on the water, and under one of the trees a wee-wee mouse, with pink ears.

“Oh!” cried Rose, clapping her hands. “Oh! how I wish I could be little enough to play there with them. Are they alive, Mr. Japanese Man?”

The Man grinned more than ever. Then



he came close up to Rose and whispered behind his hand, as though it were a great secret: —

“No, not alive *now*. But after dark, when moon shines, and store all empty — all big folks gone away — then all come alive. My — my! Litty ol’ man walk down hill, go fishy in brook. Duck say ‘*Quack, quack!*’ Litty rabbit hop *so-so* over bridge. Litty mouse cry ‘*Wee, wee!*’ and climb up pine-tree. My! Litty girl like to see?”

“Oh! Have *you* ever seen?” cried Rose with her eyes very wide.

But just then her mamma came back, with a bundle under her arm, which was probably a little Wedding Present, though Rose did not care enough about it to inquire. But she was very sorry when the Japanese Man bowed politely and walked away to the other end of the store. She had wanted to ask him a great many more questions.

“Come, Rose,” said her mother; “we must go home now.”





THE LITTLEST BABY WHITE RABBIT







“O Mamma! I want it!” sighed Rose wistfully.

“Want what? The garden? Oh, my Dear! I cannot buy you that,” said her mamma sadly; “it costs dollars and dollars. But maybe I could buy you the mouse, or the duck, or the rabbit, or the little old gentleman up there. Would you like one of them, Dear?”

“Oh, no!” cried Rose. “It would be dreadful to take them away from their lovely garden. I wouldn’t have one of them for anything. Think how lonesome he would be when it grew dark and they all came alive!”

On the way home Rose told her mamma the great secret, which the Japanese Man had told her. And her mamma thought it was all very strange indeed, and said she wished that she too was little enough to play in the wonderful garden with Rose and that interesting family.

When they reached home Rose told Kenneth all about the toy garden, and the secret which the Japanese Man had told her. But



Kenneth only said, "Pooh! I don't believe a word of it," which was very disappointing. But, of course, Kenneth had not seen the garden, nor heard the Japanese Man tell the secret, which made a great difference.

When it was dark Rose went to bed, and in a little while her mamma came to kiss her good-night. Rose held her tightly by the hand and made her sit down on the edge of the bed, where the moonlight shone like silver.

"O Mamma!" she whispered. "Think of the shop, all dark and empty now, with just one moonbeam shining on the little garden in the corner. And the little old man comes alive, *pop!* like that! Now he goes walking out of his house, down the little path over the hill. And the bunny-rabbit scampers in front of him, *hoppity-hop!* Can't you see him, Mamma? Now they come to the little bridge; the funny duck says '*Quack, quack!*' and swims away round and round the garden. Now the little old man sits down under one of the tiny pine-trees and begins to fish in the



brook. And the wee-wee mouse runs up and down the tree and nibbles the cheese which the old man has in his pocket for bait. O Mamma, I can see it all, just as plainly! I wish I were there."

"I can almost see it, too," said Mamma.

"O Mamma, I think I could grow little just as easily as they could come alive. Don't you?" said Rose.

Her mother answered, "We-el, perhaps."

But she would never take Rose to the Japanese shop after dark, to see whether or not it could be done. Maybe she was afraid that Rose might grow little and stay little always — which would have been a dreadful thing for her mamma. But Rose thinks that she herself would like it very well indeed, — to live always in that wonderful garden with the mouse and the duck and the rabbit and the funny little old man, — if only Kenneth would grow little, too. But Kenneth does not want to grow little. He is trying just as hard as he can, every day, to grow big.



## CHAPTER IV

### APRIL FOOL'S NIGHT

ON the night of April Fool's day Kenneth had a strange adventure. It was Kenneth's way to direct his dreamland journey toward Fairyland, where, if he but knows the secret how, a child can have the pleasantest possible times. On this particular night Kenneth shut his eyes tight and said the magic words which are the ticket on the Fairy Railroad; and presto! as usual, he found himself spinning through space into the realm where he would be. He kept his eyes shut tight, however, for every wise child knows that he must not peep during that wonderful journey, nor try to find out how it is done, or he will never be able to go again. It was only when a soft little jounce told him that the trip was over that Kenneth opened his eyes and ventured to look around.



Yes, there he was, sure enough! He remembered the glittering Christmas-tree avenue which led up from the station. He remembered the beautiful flower beds on either side of the path — fairy beds where the flowers could talk prettily, and answer any questions which a child might ask. He remembered the white marble palace which gleamed beyond the Christmas trees, a palace full of wonder and delight. He hastened toward it up the hill. Yes, this was certainly the Fairyland of his dreams, where he always had such a lovely, lovely time; where all that he wished came true in the most marvelous way, and where delightful surprises were continually happening to give him pleasure. Kenneth smacked his lips already at thought of the goodies he would have to eat, and his fingers wriggled eagerly, longing to clutch the wonder-toys which he knew were growing somewhere about for him, when he had time to look for them.

Now there was no one to meet him at the



station, and Kenneth thought this strange. For he had expected to find his usual guide, a pretty little gauze fairy in spangled white, with a wand and crown and all the dainty ornaments which fairies wear. Kenneth was not greatly troubled, however, for he had been to Fairyland so often that he knew the country very well indeed, and he was not at all bashful nor afraid to help himself if he should see anything which pleased him.

He began briskly to walk up the avenue, on either side of which the flowers nodded and smiled at him, saying, "Good evening, Kenneth. How are you to-night?"

Kenneth laughed and nodded back, thinking to himself, "How very pretty they look! I never before saw them so gorgeous and beautiful. They must be perfumed with extra sweetness; I will go and see." And, stepping up to a great bed of lilies, he bent over them, giving a deep, deep sniff; for Kenneth loved dearly the fragrance of flowers.

"Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!" Kenneth



sneezed, and sneezed again, so that his head almost fell off. "Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!" He reeled and staggered as he turned away. And all the flowers laughed so that they nearly snapped their slender stalks. They seemed to find it a great joke.

"You dreadful flowers! You are full of snuff! Achoo!" he cried indignantly.

"Aha! Aha! You know all about it!" cried the flowers. "The trick is not new to you; but is it not funny? Aha! Aha!"

Kenneth did not think it at all funny as he ran on up the pathway, sneezing painfully at every step. At last he paused to wipe his eyes. "Achoo! Achoo!" Poor boy! He was fairly weak with his efforts, and spying a little seat near by under a tree, thought he would sit down to rest a minute and get his breath before going on his way. It was a funny little seat, like a great toadstool, and it looked very comfortable. But no sooner had Kenneth seated himself, than the wretched thing sank down into the ground, leaving



him with a bump on the gravel of the avenue.

“Aha! Aha!” cried the flowers, tittering foolishly when they saw Kenneth sprawling. “Oh, how funny you do look! What a good joke! How clever! We shall die laughing!”

“You are very silly flowers,” said Kenneth, pouting. “You laugh at nothing at all. I never knew you to be so disagreeable.” And, trying to look very dignified in spite of his dusty jacket, he jumped up and strode down the avenue. The inviting little round seats seemed to have sprung up everywhere like mushrooms since his last visit, but he was too cautious to sit down again, although he was very tired.

Kenneth walked so fast to escape the mortifying laughter which rang from the flower-bells, that he had almost passed the last Christmas tree before he remembered the magic fruit which they always bore for him.

“Hello!” he cried. “I meant to look for a new jack-knife. I always find just what I



want on these trees. Why, yes — there is one now, right over my head. Oh, what a beauty !” He reached up to grasp it as it swung about a foot above his nose. But at the very moment when Kenneth stretched out his hand, the tree gave a sudden jerk and up flew the knife quite out of reach.

“ Oh !” cried Kenneth, stamping his foot angrily. “ What made it do that ?”

“ Ha, ha !” snickered the flowers, who had been peeping at him from a distance. “ What a joke ! Try again, Kenneth.” And Kenneth tried again and again, jumping after the knife more frantically each time. But it was of no use. A malicious breeze, or some other cause, seemed to bend the tree away from him whenever he reached toward it. And at last he gave up in disgust.

“ I wanted a fountain pen, too,” he said to himself. “ There ought to be one on another tree. Yes, here it is.” And once more Kenneth reached eagerly for the shining black thing that dangled close by his hand.



Pop! Kenneth was half blinded by a stream of water that spurted into his eye. It was no fountain pen, but a fountain pop-gun that had gone off when he touched it.

“Ha, ha!” shrieked the flowers, in a perfect madness of delight. Kenneth sat down on the grass to wipe his eyes and dry the little river that was running most uncomfortably up his coat sleeve. But my! How quickly he sprang up again! The grass that looked so tempting and soft was a cruel snare. For some one had wickedly planted it with pins or needles. Poor Kenneth! This was too much.

It is no fun to find one's self a human pin-cushion. He began to cry, and even then he heard the voices of the flowers sounding faintly, and they were laughing still. He glanced toward them angrily, then tucked his hands into his pockets and resolved not to let them see him cry. He marched away up the avenue without a glance into the Christmas trees, although they dangled the most inter-



esting bundles before his face and seemed trying to tempt him to pluck their magic fruit. He also kept off the grass more carefully than if there had been a staring sign-board to warn him.

Now just outside the palace grew a thicket of magic nut bushes. Here Kenneth always stopped on his way to the greater wonders inside, to crack a nut and to have a pleasant surprise. Yes, there at the foot of the marble steps was the thicket, green as usual, and full of brown nuts, mysteriously knobby and promising. Kenneth picked one and knelt down on the gravel to crack it with a stone. But instead of the beautiful velvet cloak, magically folded into a tiny parcel, or a dwarf pony which would quickly grow full-sized, or a picture-book with moving figures on its pages, such as he had found at other times, the nut was stuffed with dusty cobwebs, which were of no use to any one, least of all to Kenneth.

“Oh!” said Kenneth, in disappointment, and then he distinctly heard a queer voice



cry, "April Fool!" He looked up and around, but there was no one to be seen.

"April Fool!" cried the voice again. "Ha, ha! Kenneth has *such* a sense of fun! He is a great joker himself; ha, ha!" Kenneth thought it must be one of the flowers, though the voice sounded different. He wished the good Fairy would come to him. His chin began to quiver, when he heard the same queer voice tittering behind the thicket of nut bushes. There was a little summer house close by, and into this Kenneth ran to hide the tears which would come into his eyes. What a disagreeable country it was, this Fairyland which he had loved so well! He came here to be happy; but all these ugly tricks fairly spoiled the pretty place. He said to himself that he would never come again. Just then he spied a large, square envelope fastened to the side of the summer house by a thorn. It was addressed, "For Kenneth."

"Why, that means me," he cried, very much surprised. "Perhaps it is a letter from



my good Fairy to explain why she has not come to meet me." And he tore it open eagerly.

It was a fat, bulky letter of several sheets. This was very exciting, for Kenneth had not received many letters in his short life. He unfolded the first sheet. From the middle of the page stared at him these words printed in huge red letters:—

APRIL FOOL!



## CHAPTER V

### THE APRIL FOOL

**K**ENNETH looked at it angrily, then turned over the other pages. They were just the same as the first one. He tore up the sheets and threw them on the ground. It was only an April Fool letter, after all!

“April Fool!” cried a voice, echoing the same hateful words. “April Fool! Ha! ha! What a joke!” It was a funny little voice, louder than those of the flowers, and, instead of being silvery sweet like theirs, it was harsh and disagreeable. Kenneth glanced up, and there, perched on the railing of the summer-house, was the queerest little fellow, making the most horrible faces. With a bound the figure sprang inside, and Kenneth saw him more clearly. He was certainly a fairy, for he had wings, gauzy and beautiful, growing from his shoulders. But his dress was unlike



that of any fairy whom Kenneth had met. It reminded him, however, of pictures that he had sometimes seen in books. This fairy wore a suit half of red and half of yellow; one leg and one shoe were red and the other yellow. His doublet was divided likewise, and likewise the funny hood which he wore about his shoulders. The borders of his costume were cut into points, and from every point hung a little bell that jingled and jangled mischievously whenever the imp moved about — which was continually. His cap had two long pointed ears, and in his hand he carried a wand, on the end of which was a copy of himself dressed in red and yellow, and tinkly with many bells. He was a very funny figure, and his mouth stretched from ear to ear in a grin which made Kenneth laugh, too. But Kenneth soon stopped laughing; for there was something about the imp's smile that was not kindly, and that made one half afraid.

“Who are you?” asked Kenneth, trying to



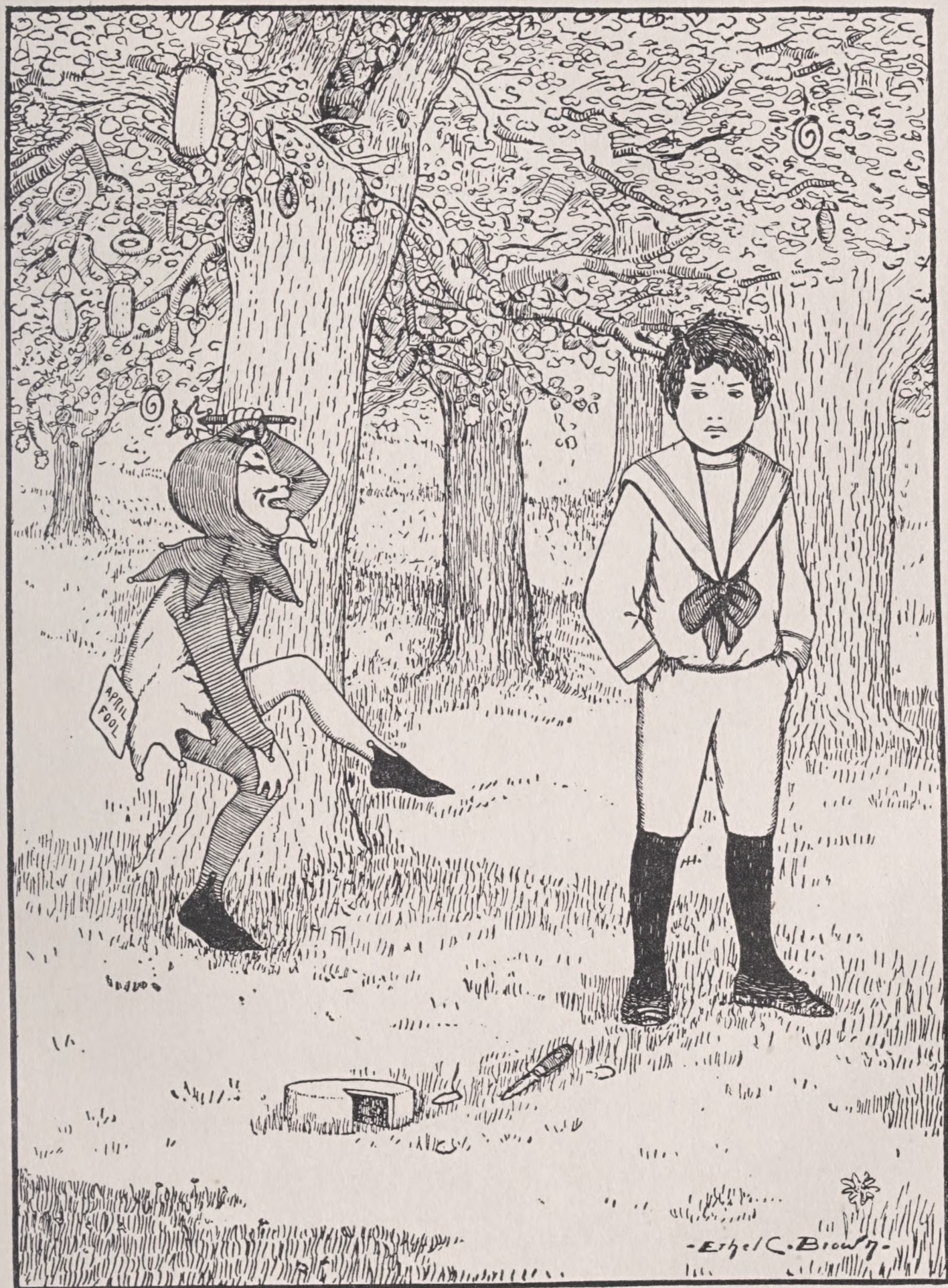
seem very bold. "And what are you laughing at? I don't see anything so very funny at this moment."

"Oh, don't you?" grinned the imp. "April Fool! I do. I am April Fool. Why, don't you know me?" And turning around he showed Kenneth a large placard, such as he had himself often made, pinned to one of the points of the imp's doublet. "APRIL FOOL!" it read. Kenneth began to understand.

"Oh, you are April Fool, are you?" he said. "I never saw you before."

"Ho! You never *saw* me? No, but you have used my name often enough. You remember April Fool's day every year? Aha! Those were good tricks you played, though to be sure most of them were old enough — old as I am, and that *is* old indeed, I can tell you, my little joker. But they are good jokes, are they not? One never tires of them, does one?" And again he grinned at Kenneth maliciously.





" I AM APRIL FOOL "







“N-no,” said Kenneth, doubtfully, looking again at the pieces of the torn April Fool letter and rubbing his eyes, which still smarted from the snuff. “But I think jokes are funnier when one looks on, don’t you?”

“Ha! ha!” laughed the imp. “That is the best joke of all. Why, some folk seem to think as you do. But not I! Now I love a good joke for its own sake better than anything else in the world. I am always in it, for *I am* the joke itself. Ha, ha!”

“Then it is you who have made all these things happen to me,” said Kenneth angrily. “What do you mean by it?”

“Ha! ha! Don’t you know what night it is? To-morrow is the first of April! What can you expect in Fairyland except the very biggest of jokes? This is my night. But come, now, don’t be sulky. It is only a joke after all, and you are such a joker yourself that you ought to take these little matters very cheerfully. Come with me.”

“I don’t want to come with you,” said



Kenneth, hanging back. "I want to go home."

"Nonsense, you cannot go home yet," answered the imp. "It is not nearly morning. Now that you have come you must stay here until the time is up."

"Then I want my good Fairy guide," said Kenneth.

"Ho!" cried the other in scorn. "She is too silly-kind, too goody-goody. She has no real sense of fun, poor thing."

"I like her fun best," insisted Kenneth. "Please take me to her."

"Oh, very well," said April Fool carelessly. "If you insist I will bring you to her. But first you must have something to eat, for it is a long journey. Are you not hungry, poor boy?"

Kenneth confessed that he was very hungry. "Then we will go to the kitchen garden," replied the imp; "and there you can feast as much as you like."

"Oh, yes! I have been to the kitchen



garden," cried Kenneth, brightening. "The good Fairy took me there; it is a lovely place!"

He followed April Fool out of the summer-house into a narrow path leading on and on and on between green hedgerows full of blossoms. Overhead the birds sang sweetly, and the sky was blue. Kenneth began to feel very happy. At last, in the distance, he caught sight of the kitchen garden, as he well remembered it, with its tall pie-fruit trees, its cooky bushes, its éclair plants, and its ice-cream fountains. The glimpse made him so hungry that he could hardly wait to be there, and he ran ahead, outstripping April Fool himself.

"That is right! Hurry, my boy!" cried the imp heartily. And Kenneth skipped on happily. But suddenly *bump!* went his head and his knee against something hard, and he came to a dizzy stop, hardly knowing what had happened. There lay the kitchen garden just beyond, but something had stopped him



and would not let him pass, something which he could not see.

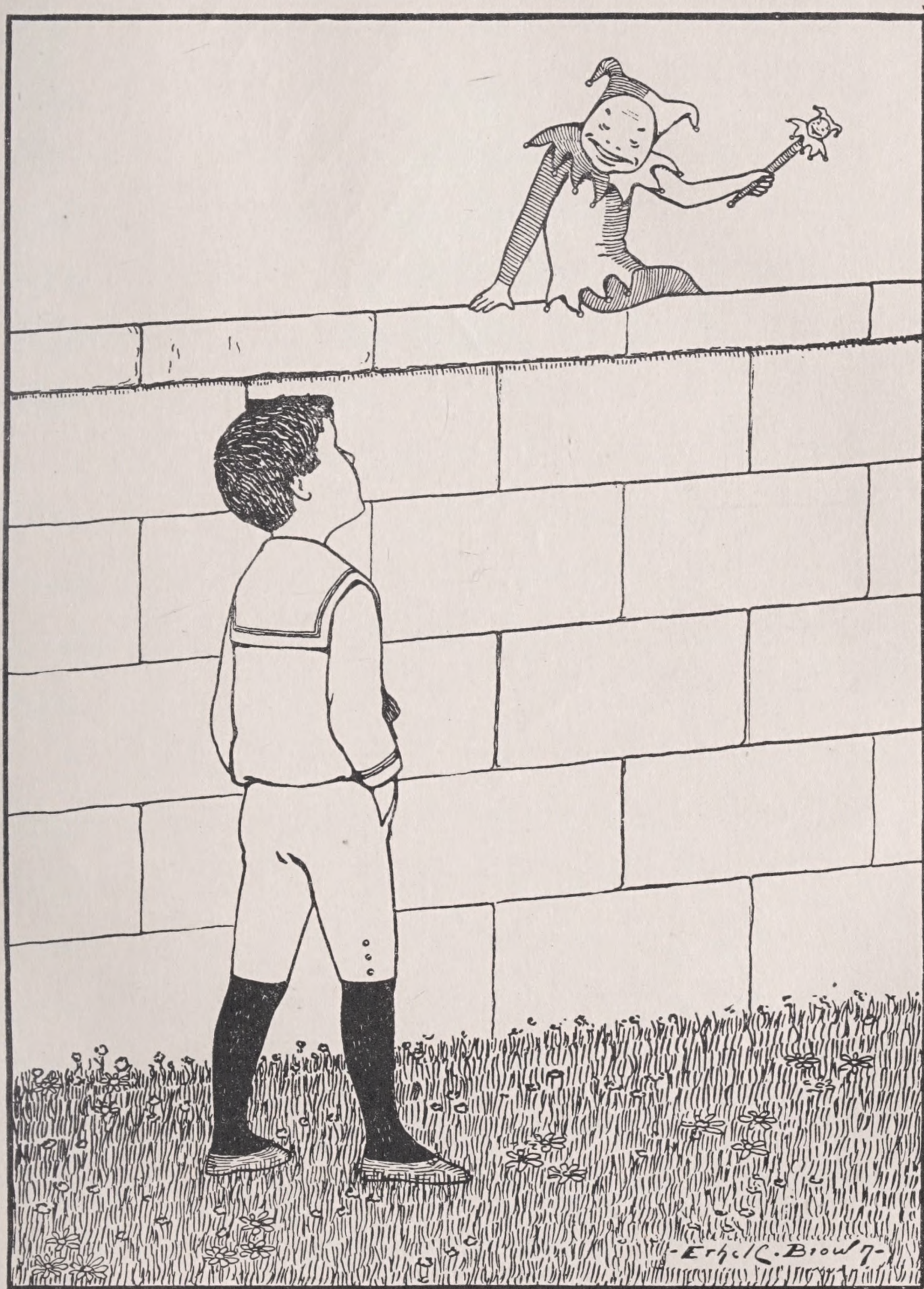
“Ha! ha! April Fool again!” laughed the imp, holding his sides for merriment. “Don’t you see through this joke? Why, it is perfectly transparent.”

Sure enough! Kenneth put out his hand, and found that it was a wall of glass, which stretched across the path from hedge to hedge; a gateless wall which he could by no means climb over, but through which he could plainly see all the dainties on the other side. Kenneth groaned. “Oh, I am so hungry! What a cruel, cruel joke!”

“Jokes do seem cruel sometimes,” admitted April Fool; “but they are *such* fun! Oh, my, oh, my! How queer you did look when you bumped against that wall!” and he burst out laughing once more.

“Well, are you going to let me in?” asked Kenneth, trying to keep his temper, though he thought the joke in very poor taste, like most of April Fool’s tricks.





KENNETH FOUND THAT IT WAS A WALL OF GLASS







“Oh, no, we cannot enter here,” said the imp. “This is only an impracticable window. We shall have to go around by another way, a *détour* of some miles. But this time I really promise to take you to the kitchen garden.”

Kenneth was very angry, but he began to suspect that he must let April Fool have his own way on this night. They turned back down the narrow path and began a long, tiresome journey round about and round about to the garden which they had already seen so near.

And what a journey that was! beset by so many surprises, shocks, and practical jokes that Kenneth was nearly frantic before they had seen the end. They were crossing a bridge over a pretty little stream, when in the middle — *crash!* The whole structure gave way, and down they fell, with a sickening sinking feeling — fully three feet! Then the bridge came to rest on the magic springs which were made to complete this jouncy joke. After this their way led through a pitch-black cavern,



which was so silent that Kenneth could hear his heart beat as he felt his way along. Suddenly there was an awful roar, like the growl of hundreds of wild beasts let loose. Kenneth screamed with fright, but the imp cried out, "April Fool!" And immediately the cave was filled with light, showing only an innocent sound-machine which had made all this commotion.

They came within sight of a broad brook, which the imp said they must cross. Kenneth took off his shoes and stockings to wade and stepped down to the margin. But what was his anger to find that it was only a wide mirror over which they were able to pass dryshod. That was a famous joke, to judge by the imp's shrieks of laughter when he saw Kenneth put out his foot to wade into the glassy stream. But Kenneth had become so tired of such fun that he did not even smile.

Kenneth grew thirsty, and they stopped to drink at a fountain which gushed clear and sparkling by the wayside. But at the first



draught Kenneth found his mouth full of horrid, briny water, such as one swallows by mistake when one is bathing in the sea. Poor boy ! This made him all the thirstier, but he was resolved not to show April Fool how wretched and unhappy he really was.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE APRIL-FOOL JOURNEY

**A**T last, however, when Kenneth was so tired and faint that he could hardly walk another step, they came to the kitchen garden. There were the pie trees and the raspberry shrubs, the caramel plants and the bonbon hedge, brown with luscious chocolates.

“Now, help yourself,” said the imp cordially. And without further invitation Kenneth fell to. A fine cream pie lay under one of the trees, from which it had just fallen. Kenneth cut a wedge out of it with the knife which was sticking conveniently in the tree-trunk, and began to eat it ravenously. But faugh! What dreadful stuff! It was frosted with soapsuds instead of whipped cream!

“April Fool!” cried the imp, dancing up and down, for this was the best joke of all.



“Oh!” whimpered Kenneth, “I hope they are not all April-Fool goodies.” And he ran to the next tree. But a bite was all he needed to prove that he must not trust his eyes this April Fool’s night. The mince pies were made of sand and sawdust, with pebbles for plums. The sponge cake was indeed a real sponge. The doughnuts were of India rubber; they might be fine for a teething baby to bite, but they were a poor lunch for a hungry boy. The griddle-cakes were rounds of leather, nicely browned on both sides. The salad was made of tissue paper; the chocolates were stuffed with cotton wool and other horrid stuff; while the maple sugar, upon which Kenneth was perfectly sure he could rely, turned out to be yellow soap — clean, but not appetizing.

Even the eggs, growing innocently white upon the egg-plant, turned out to be hollow mockeries; some humorous little boy seemed to have blown their insides away, as a great joke. Once Kenneth would have thought that



a very funny idea. But now he sat down and cried and cried, he was so disappointed and so hungry.

“Boo hoo ! Boo hoo !” sobbed Kenneth. “I want to go home. I don’t like Fairyland one bit !”

“Ha ! ha !” laughed the imp. “April Fool ! This is n’t Fairyland at all ; this is April Fool Land, and you are *It*. But come, I really think you have had enough of it. I will take you to the true Fairyland, and give you over to your kind, good, serious Fairy guide. Shall we go ? *One, two, three — out goes he !*” And with a snap of his fingers, Kenneth found himself outside the tantalizing kitchen garden, walking toward his good Fairy’s real, truly palace, which gleamed comfortingly through the trees.

At first he dared not think that it was really so ; he suspected another joke of April Fool’s. But at last he spied the good Fairy herself, standing at the top of the long flight of marble steps which led up to the palace. Kenneth



ran forward and waved his hand eagerly, he was so anxious to exchange guides and to be rid of the hateful imp. But the Fairy did not seem to see him. She was shading her eyes with her hand and looking off over the Christmas trees, appearing troubled.

“Humph!” growled the imp. “There she is, looking for you. And how eager you are to leave me, now that you have enjoyed all the jokes I had to play. Well, good-by! You have only to walk up the staircase to your goody-goody Fairy, and you will be safe from me. I cannot pass into that palace, where the fun is of a different kind from mine.”

“It is a great deal nicer than yours, for it is always kind,” retorted Kenneth, “and yet it is just as funny.”

“Very well, go and look for it, then,” cried the imp, and without another word he disappeared.

Kenneth was much relieved to see him go. He set his foot on the lowest stair and eagerly began the ascent of the marble flight. But no



sooner had he lifted his foot to the second step than the staircase itself began to move under him, so that he had to step quickly to keep from falling. Horrible! What did this mean? "April Fool!" cried a voice behind him. "Ha! ha! It is my last joke, and it is a rare good one. You are on a treadmill staircase, Kenneth. You must climb fast or you will fall down and be ground up inside the machine. Hurrah! Step lively, please! Quicker, quicker! Maybe you will reach the top by to-morrow morning."

Kenneth had to work his little legs faster and faster and faster, as the great staircase revolved under him. Yet however he strove he reached never a step nearer the top, but remained always in the same spot. And the Fairy still looked away over the tops of the Christmas trees, without seeing him.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the imp; but his voice was fainter than it had been, and Kenneth hoped it was fading away. The poor boy was so exhausted that he felt he could not keep



up for long. His legs ached and his head ached dizzily, and his poor back, bent over the whirling staircase, ached most of all. "I cannot bear it," he said to himself, panting and out of breath. "I cannot move my legs any faster. I cannot breathe. I must sit down, even if I do go under to be ground into little pieces."

Without more ado Kenneth sat down on the staircase, closing his eyes and shuddering with fear of what might happen next. But what happened? The staircase merely stopped with a jerk — and stood still.

"April Fool!" cried the far-off voice of the imp. "You might have done it long ago. April Fool — Fool — Fool!" and the voice faded away into a mere sigh of the breeze.

At the same moment Kenneth heard a sweet call from the top of the staircase. "Kenneth, Kenneth!" it said, in silvery tones quite unlike the imp's harsh ones. And, looking up, he saw his good Fairy coming swiftly down the staircase toward him.



“Oh, good Fairy,” sobbed Kenneth, “I have had such a dreadful time looking for you! Please stay by me, and do not let that bad, bad April Fool find me again.”

The good Fairy leaned over Kenneth and put her hand on his head. “Poor boy!” she said. “Has April Fool been playing his tricks on you? This was his night, you know. He said you were a friend of his, so we had to let him have his joke with you. He is indeed a horrid fellow, and I hope he is no longer your friend.”

“No, he will never be my friend again,” cried Kenneth.

“I like my own kind of jokes a great deal better,” said the Fairy: “pleasant surprises, unexpected kindnesses, pain turned into pleasure, and disappointment into joy. One can play those jokes all through the year. But it is too late for any of them to-night. You must go back home now, Kenneth.”

“I am quite ready to go,” said Kenneth wearily, for even a pleasant joke had no charms



for him now, he was so tired. The Fairy took him by the hand and led him back to the station. They passed the magic nut bushes, but Kenneth did not pause. They walked under the tempting Christmas trees, but he did not look up. They went between the rows of flowers, gently tittering on either side, but Kenneth did not so much as glance at them. The kind Fairy held his hand, and April Fool could play no tricks upon him now.

At the station the Fairy guide kissed Kenneth sweetly, and closed his eyes with her wand. "Come again to-morrow night," she murmured, "and naughty April Fool will be gone for another year. Then you shall come into my palace and we will play some happy tricks."

Then she spoke the magic words of his return ticket, and Kenneth, with his eyes closed, felt a spring, a rush, and a whirling about his head. But he never peeped until he felt once more the gentle jounce that told



him the end of his journey had come. Then with his fists he rubbed his eyes and, winking sleepily, opened them to find himself snugly lying in bed, with the morning sun shining into his window.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE DOLLS' MAY-PARTY

**A**LICE had never gone to a party before. Of course Rose, who was almost six years old, had gone to a great many. But Alice, who was her newest doll, was very young. She had come, you remember, on Christmas day, at the same time with Buff and Fluff; and the kittens had never yet been to a party either.

Matilda, who was Rose's old doll, had been to almost as many parties as Rose herself. But Matilda was not invited to this party. Only the youngest and prettiest dolls were invited to this party, for it was to be a May-Party, where every one has to look as beautiful as possible. Poor Matilda had only one eye and a broken nose.

Ernestine, who was Lilian's doll and who lived in the next block to Rose and Alice, sent



out the invitations to ten dolls and their little mammas. They were to come at two o'clock in the afternoon of May Day for a picnic at her house. And every one was to bring a luncheon in a little basket, just as if it were a really truly picnic in the summer woods, instead of a cold city May.

Rose dressed Alice in her prettiest white muslin gown, with a blue sash and the dear little watch which had come in the Christmas stocking. Alice's yellow hair was curled and tied with a blue bow, and she looked so much like her little mother that Mrs. Thornton could not help laughing when they started for the picnic together. But Rose did not see anything very funny about it. Every one said that she looked like her own mother, and why should not Alice look like Rose?

At the very last moment, when they were starting for the party, Rose ran back upstairs to the play-room, where the old Matilda sat in her little chair by the fireplace.

"You poor dear old thing," said Rose, hug-



ging her tight, "I never before went to a party without you, and it seems very cruel to leave you all alone. But please remember that I still love you dearly, though you have only one eye, and your nose is broken, and you are n't pretty like Alice. I can't take you to parties any more, because people would laugh at you. But you have had a great many good times, have n't you, Matilda? while Alice has n't been yet to a single party. I must make Alice have a good time now, for she is my youngest child. Good-by, Matilda dear, and don't you be lonesome while we are gone."

Then Rose kissed the poor old doll and set her back in the little chair beside the fireplace. But Matilda looked very sad when the little mother went out of the door with the new doll in her arms, and it almost looked as if there was a real tear on her faded cheek under the one remaining eye.

When the front door banged behind them, Matilda fell forward onto the carpet and lay



there face downwards all the while that Rose and Alice were at the May Party.

The party was held in Lilian's dining-room. The floor was covered with a green rug which had flowers on it, and which looked like the real grassy out-doors of the country. In the middle of the room, instead of a dining-table, was a little May-pole, as tall as Rose's head, with a wreath of flowers at the top and pretty colored ribbons hanging down all around it.

On one side was a throne with three little steps leading up to it, for the May Queen to sit on. And on top of the throne lay a beautiful crown of real flowers for the Queen to wear.

First of all, the dolls were stood up in a long row, so that the prettiest one might be chosen. There was Ernestine herself, the hostess, who was a fat wax doll as big as a real baby, with flaxen hair and four white teeth. Ernestine was very accomplished, for she could say "Papa" and "Mamma," but



she was not nice and huggable and pretty like Alice. (At least, that was what Rose thought.)

Then there was Marjorie, who had black hair, and Helen-Grace-Antoinette, who wore a real satin dress that came from Paris; and Bébé, who was in long clothes and who was thought by all the little mothers, except her own, too babyish for a May Party. There was Yo-San, who was a lovely Japanese lady; and Toto, a little boy sailor doll, the only gentleman present, — and of course *he* could n't be the May Queen! Then there were Blanche, and Beatrice, and Dinah who was black, — everybody wondered why she came to the party. Last of all, there was Alice. She was smaller than Blanche and Beatrice, but she wore a watch tucked into her sash. No other doll had a watch.

Each little girl wrote on a piece of paper the name of the doll which, next to her own, she thought prettiest. No one could vote for her own doll, for of course each little mother



would think her own child the best, and there would have to be ten queens.

Lilian's mamma counted the votes. And what do you suppose? Alice was elected to be May Queen! It was all on account of the watch. You can imagine how proud Rose was.

They set Alice on the throne and put the crown of real flowers on her yellow curls, and she looked so pretty that Rose had to rush up and kiss her the very first thing. And all the other little girls wanted to kiss her, too.

Then the dolls danced around the May-pole, each one holding the end of one of the colored ribbons, till the pole was twisted all the way down and looked like a big stick of striped candy. The dolls seemed to enjoy it very much, but their mammas were a bit dizzy afterwards.

Then it was time for the picnic. Everybody sat down cross-legged on the green grass rug and opened the little lunch-baskets. First they spread a napkin on the grass, just



as one does at a real picnic, and set all the cakes and cookies and sandwiches on it, where every one could reach for herself. And they ate without any plates or knives or forks, which was great fun. But there were no ants to come and eat up the crumbs.

There were little cunning cakes, and figs and dates, grapes and apples, and some molasses candy. And there was lemonade to drink, — just like a grown-up picnic.

After they had eaten everything they played games around the May-pole until it was almost dark, and then it was time to go home. But before they went Ernestine, who gave the party, carried up to the throne a big tissue-paper basket full of flowers, and gave it to the May Queen, kneeling down before Alice on the lowest step of the throne, just as they do in plays. And Rose was so proud that her face turned as pink as one of the roses in the May Queen's lovely basket. Each doll had a dear little nosegay to take home, but only the Queen had a whole basket full of flowers.



“You dear, lovely Queen Alice!” cried Rose, as she hugged her dollie tight on the way home. “I am so proud of you, and I love you better than anything in the world except Papa and Mamma and Kenneth and Cousin Charlie,—oh, yes, and Matilda. I had almost forgotten poor Matilda.”

Rose was quiet for a minute, and then she whispered to Alice, “Don’t you think you ought to give some of these lovely flowers to poor Matilda, who did n’t go to the party and who is n’t pretty any more?”

Alice was a sweet little doll, and was quite willing to share her flowers. So as soon as the front door was opened Rose ran upstairs to the play-room with the May Queen on one arm and the basket of flowers on the other. There she found poor Matilda lying face downward on the carpet.

“Oh, you poor, poor dollie!” cried Rose. “Did you feel so badly as that? Well, don’t cry any more. Here is your dear little sister, the May Queen, who has come to share her





SHE LIFTED POOR MATILDA AND SET HER UP ON THE  
WINDOW SEAT







lovely flowers with you. We both love you so much that we are going to make you our Play-Room Queen. See ! ”

Then she lifted poor Matilda and set her up on the window seat, as if she were on a throne. And she took the beautiful flowers out of Alice's basket and made a wreath which she placed on the old doll's scraggly hair. And she pinned a lovely rose on Matilda's dress.

“ Now you look very nice and dear,” said Rose, as she kissed her on her battered cheek. “ Good night, Queen Matilda of the play-room. Isn't this almost as good as being May Queen ? ”

And Matilda looked as if she thought it was. She seemed to be smiling with her ugly mouth. And when Rose softly shut the door of the play-room the old doll looked almost pretty, — in spite of her one eye and broken nose, — sitting there on the window seat, with Alice, the beautiful May Queen, at her feet.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DARK ROOM

**I**N the middle of June Kenneth came down with the scarlet fever. This was very unpleasant for Kenneth, and for Kenneth's papa and mamma, who were just making ready to move the family down to the Island for the summer. It was very hard for Rose, too ; for of course she could not play with Kenneth nor even see him for fear lest she too should catch the fever. It was a terrible thing for Rose not to see Kenneth for days and weeks.

They decided to send her away into the country, to the farm where Aunt Mary and Uncle John with Rose's cousin Charlie Carroll had gone to live. Aunt Mary said that she would be glad to play for a while that Rose was her own little girl, for poor Aunt Mary had no little girl of her own. And Charlie



thought that it would be great fun to have a little sister; for you see he had never had one. And that is why he did not make a very good kind of brother at first.

Rose had not been in the country long before she began to miss Kenneth more than ever,—more even than she had expected. It was all Charlie's fault.

Charlie had his naughty days, — every one has naughty days, sometimes, until he learns better. But it happened unfortunately that Charlie's naughtiest time came the very day after Rose arrived in the country, when she was feeling especially lonesome, and before she was acquainted with the new house and the barn and the new pets and playthings. She began to be homesick almost as soon as her father said good-by to her and went away to the train which would carry him home to Mamma and Kenneth and the city. But she was still more homesick the next morning, when she woke up and remembered that she was not going to see Kenneth all that long,



bright, beautiful, out-of-doorsy day. So you see she needed very much that Charlie should be extra kind and good to her.

Charlie's mamma lay awake that morning smiling to herself to think how nice it was that Rose was going to be Charlie's little sister for a time, and how happy he would make her in this beautiful country, showing her the new kittens, and the rabbits, and old Brindle's little calf, and the flower-garden, — all the things which Charlie had enjoyed so much since he had come into the county to live. But that was before she knew this was Charlie's naughty day.

From the moment when he first opened his eyes and got out of the wrong side of the bed, Charlie was in trouble, and his mother had to speak to him so many times that she was ashamed to have Rose hear.

After breakfast, when Rose cried eagerly, "Oh, Charlie, now will you show me everything?" Charlie sulked and said, "Oh, bother!" And when Rose followed him out



into the garden, he tried to run away from her. But Rose could run fast too, and he soon found her panting at his heels.

“What makes you run so fast, Charlie?” she asked. “I can hardly keep up with you.”

“Well, I don’t want you to keep up with me,” he answered, turning his back on her and slapping his stick at a poor sunflower. “You had better go back to the house. I don’t want to play with you.”

Rose’s eyes filled with tears and she said, “What makes you so bad to me, Charlie? I have n’t seen you for a long time, but I thought you were a nice, pleasant boy, like Kenneth. Oh, how I wish I could go back to Kenneth!”

“Go home as soon as you please,” said Charlie rudely. “I don’t want you for a sister if you are so fussy and cross.”

“I am not fussy and cross!” cried Rose indignantly. “You have been very impolite and horrid to me, and I am ashamed of you!”

Then, I am sorry to say, Charlie did a very



naughty thing. He pushed Rose roughly, so that she fell down and bruised her poor little knee. She tried not to cry, but the tears would come. And when she saw Charlie disappear around the corner of the house with his hands in his pockets, as if he did not care at all, she began to sob.

“I wish I had not come to the country!” she whimpered.

Now from the parlor window Charlie’s mother had seen this last naughtiness, and straightway she went after her boy, who was kicking his toe against the piazza steps.

“Charlie, you have been a very naughty boy,” she said. “You have hurt your little cousin, and I must punish you. What makes you so bad to-day? I thought you and Rose would have such pleasant times together!”

“I don’t like girls,” said Charlie sulkily. “They are telltales and cry-babies. I am glad I pushed her.”

“Charlie!” exclaimed his mother, much shocked. “Go right up to the dark room



and sit down in a chair and stay there until you are sorry. When you are truly sorry you can come out and tell Rose."

"I shan't ever be sorry," said Charlie obstinately. "And I will never tell her that I am."

"Then you will have no supper to-night," said his mother firmly. "Go, now. Do as I tell you, Charlie."

Charlie knew that it was not safe to linger when his mother spoke in that tone. He stamped up the three flights of stairs and opened the door of the dark room. It was a spare chamber that was seldom used, save on Charlie's naughty days. The blinds were closed tight, and not a ray of the beautiful summer sunshine could enter. Instead, there was a gloomy, greenish dimness, which was not at all pleasant. And the room was very, very still. The rest of the world seemed a long way off.

Charlie dragged a chair into the middle of the room and sat down, kicking the rungs with his feet. It was all Rose's fault. He had given



her only a tiny push, and it could not have hurt her much. She was such a cry-baby and tell-tale! Of course it must have been she who had told his mother all about it. He could hear the faint sound of old Carlo barking outside, and fancied he caught echoes of Rose's happy laughter. Yes, undoubtedly the mean little thing was playing with Carlo, enjoying herself in the beautiful sunshine as if nothing had happened, while he was shut up in the old dark room! Charlie thought of all the fine things he had planned to do this day, if something had not gone wrong from the very beginning.

A great fly buzzed against the window pane, and for a time Charlie was interested in watching it bump its foolish head again and again. But he soon grew tired of the sight and sound. What a stupid way to spend a beautiful day, watching an old fly in a dark room! How the minutes dragged that usually galloped away too fast! He had only to say that he was sorry, and he might come out. But he was not sorry, and he would never tell Rose so.



The time dragged on. The fly had ceased to buzz, and Carlo to bark. There was no sound inside or outside the dark room. Probably Rose had gone to ride. Mamma had promised to take them to the lake, where they could learn to row. What fun that would have been! Now Rose was enjoying it alone. Selfish little thing!

Charlie began to fidget. The chair was hard and uncomfortable; he thought he must have been sitting there for hours. Luncheon time was over and gone. It must be almost evening. Surely it was growing even darker in the dark room. How could he ever bear to stay there all night alone — without any supper, too! He began to feel very hungry indeed. Suppose he should starve to death! That would make Rose feel badly enough. He hoped it would break her heart. A tear rolled down the side of his nose at the thought of his sad fate.

Just then he heard a sound outside the door. The knob turned, and in tiptoed a little figure



in white, with yellow hair and blue ribbons. It was Rose. Her face was tear-stained, and she looked piteously at him without speaking. Charlie frowned, and turned his head away. He was not sorry.

Rose stood first on one foot and then on the other, glancing shyly at Charlie, as if hoping that he would speak. But he only sulked and kicked the chair-rung harder. At last she dragged another chair from a corner of the room, placed its back to his, climbed up into it and sat down.

“H’m!” thought Charlie, “She has been naughty too. Now Mamma sees that I am not the only bad one. I wonder how long she will have to stay here.”

They sat silent for a long time, back to back. Then Charlie heard a sniff behind him. He knew that Rose was crying. “I am glad of it!” he said to himself. “I am glad she was naughty and had to be punished. Usually girls are not punished like boys. They are lucky, and manage to escape.”





IN TIPTOED A LITTLE FIGURE







Another little sniff from Rose ; then a long silence. At last she spoke, in a half-sobbing voice : “ It is beautiful out of doors. But it is horrid in this dark room.” Charlie made no reply. Presently Rose tried again. “ How long have you got to stay here, Charlie ? ”

“ I don’t know,” he answered gruffly ; “ all night, perhaps.”

“ Oh ! ” Rose’s tone was startled, and again there was a long silence.

“ Are n’t you going to have any supper, Charlie ? ” she asked wistfully.

“ No,” said Charlie. “ Are you ? ”

“ N-no,” said Rose hesitating, and then she gave a very long sigh.

Charlie chuckled. She had “ told ” of him. It was her fault. Since he had to suffer, it was some comfort to think that she must do so also. He was not a bit sorry.

“ I wish we could have gone to the lake,” sighed Rose again. “ I s’pect Aunt Mary went without us.” At this tantalizing thought Charlie retorted angrily : —



“If you had not been a cry-baby and a telltale, mother would n’t have punished me, and we could both have gone.”

“I did n’t tell!” cried Rose indignantly. “I would n’t have told if you had broken my leg off. I can’t bear telltales, and I would n’t be one for anything.”

“Well, how did mother know, then?” asked Charlie, somewhat less crossly.

“I s’pose she looked out of the window and saw you push me, and I s’pose she saw that I was mis’able.”

“Cry-baby!” taunted Charlie scornfully.

“I am not a cry-baby,” said Rose, with a quaver in her voice. “It took all the skin off my knee — look! — and it hurts awfully when I bend it around, so. But I never told Aunt Mary, and she does n’t know. I cried a little because — because you hurt my feelings; that was why.”

“Humph!” grunted Charlie, looking at the bruised, tender little knee. He tried to make light of it, but his cheeks reddened,



and he felt ashamed. Rose was such a little thing, after all.

Rose writhed in her seat. "Must you stay in the chair all the time?" she asked over her shoulder.

"Yes," said Charlie briefly.

"It is so hard! I thought — if we could stand up, or sit down on the floor — maybe — but anyway we might play something else, some kind of *quiet* game; Twenty Questions, or — or something. Would you like to do that, Charlie?" She twisted about in the chair and eyed the back of his head wistfully. Charlie hardened his heart.

"No," he said crossly. "I don't want to play anything in this horrid old dark room."

"It is n't quite so lonesome now that I am here, is it?" asked Rose anxiously. Charlie made no reply. "I thought you might be glad for company," she went on. "I don't mind being here — much. But it *is* nicer outside. There is Carlo — hear him bark! And there are the sunshine and the birds and flowers —



and everything. Oh, it is lovely here in the country! I thought we would have such good times together, Charlie, as we used to do when you lived in the city, only here it is much nicer. You have so many lovely things to show me, Aunt Mary said. But now"— She stopped short as if afraid of hurting his feelings.

"How long have you got to stay here?" asked Charlie, wishing that she would go away.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered; "perhaps all night. But I hope not."

"Why, what did you do that was so bad?" asked Charlie, turning half around, in surprised interest.

"I? Oh, I—I—I did n't do anything," stammered Rose.

"Then why did Mamma send you here?" he demanded.

"She did n't send me. She does n't know I'm here. She thinks that I am in the summer house with Carlo and my dolls, where she left me—hours ago."



“Then what did you come here for?” Charlie looked at her sternly. She dropped her eyes and fidgeted with the ruffle of her dress.

“I—I came because I did n’t want you to be punished all alone. P’rhaps if I had n’t come to your house you would not have been naughty at all; so it was partly my fault. I am so sorry, Charlie! I shall stay here as long as you do.”

Charlie whirled around in his chair and sat back resolutely. He would *not* be sorry. Yes, it had been her fault; she had made him angry. Let her stay and be unhappy!

They sat very still for a time, then Charlie felt a little hand steal around the chair back and touch his gently. But he jerked away.

“Are you angry, Charlie, because I came?” asked the soft little voice. “If you are very angry, I will go away. But I had much rather stay here in the dark with you. I—I am so lonesome without Kenneth, and you are all the brother I have now. Won’t you let me be your



little truly sister and do as I would if you were Kenneth? When I knew you were shut up here it made me so unhappy that I could n't play. I could n't even enjoy the sunshine and the flowers. If you go without your supper, so shall I. And if you stay here all night, I—I *think* I shall not be afraid to stay with you. But I hope Auntie will let you out before then."

"No, she will not," said Charlie, positively. "I know she will not."

"Not if I ask her? Not if I tell her that it makes me very sad to have you here?" Rose's voice trembled.

"No," said Charlie, "I don't think I shall *ever* come out."

"Oh!" cried Rose in horror. "Then we shall die here together. We shall starve to death like the Babes in the Woods; but there will be no Robin Redbreasts to cover us with leaves. Oh, Charlie! Surely Aunt Mary would not be so cruel."

Charlie could not bear to have any one



think so of his kind mother. "Mamma is not cruel," he said. "If I stay here it is my own choice. I could come out now, if I chose to — to say — something."

Rose clapped her hands. "Oh, say it, say it now, Charlie!" she cried.

At that moment a bell rang invitingly from downstairs. "Do say it, Charlie," she begged. "There is the supper bell, and I am so hungry, are n't you?"

Charlie was very hungry, but he bit his lip and answered, "No, I will not say it."

"Oh, why not?" begged Rose. "What is it that you must say? Is it so very hard?"

"Well, — I must say that I am sorry because I pushed you." Charlie blurted out the words with a gulp of shame.

"Oh, Charlie! And you are not sorry?" Rose pleaded.

"No, I am not sorry."

"Not a little bit?"

"No, not one bit."

Rose gave a little sigh and sank back in her



chair. "Well, then I s'pose we must stay here and be hungry. For of course you must n't say it unless you are really and truly sorry — not even for the sake of supper. But oh! I know there is going to be jelly-roll. I saw Maggie making it this morning."

Charlie kicked the chair hard. "Let's try to think about something else," went on Rose cheerfully; "then perhaps we shall forget to be hungry. Let's talk about — about Carlo."

"Oh, do keep still!" grumbled Charlie. "I don't want to talk at all." Rose was silent for some minutes. Then she began to speak again, half to herself.

"I think I will go home to-morrow, if I don't starve before that. I will go to Kenneth, who will be so glad to see me, even if he is sick. Maybe I shall catch the fever and die. But that would be better than living where I have no little brother to love me. After I am gone, Charlie can come out, for of course Auntie will not ask him to tell me he is sorry



if I am not here to listen. Then Carlo and the rabbits and Brindle and the calf will all be glad to see Charlie again, and no one will miss me, for I am only a silly little girl who spoils the beautiful country so that no one is happy here any more." Here Rose gave a great sob. Charlie wriggled uncomfortably in his chair.

"I say, Rose, don't talk like that. I don't want you to go home. It was n't your fault. I was very bad to you," he stammered.

"But it was my fault, too," cried Rose eagerly. "I ought not to have said you were impolite and horrid. Even when you pushed me" —

"I am sorry I did that, Rose," interrupted Charlie quickly. "I am, truly. I did n't mean to hurt you."

Once more the little hand stole around the chair-back and crept into his own. Charlie did not drop it this time. "You said it!" cried Rose. "Oh, Charlie! I am so glad! Now we can go down to supper."



Charlie stared. "Said it? What do you mean? What have I said?"

"Why, you said *It*; that you were sorry," cried Rose, clapping her hands. "So it is all right now."

Charlie looked rather silly. "I — I did n't mean to say it," he faltered. "I said I would never say it, and I meant what I said. But I *am* sorry, and now I am glad I said I was." This sounded very queer, but Rose knew what he meant, and was quite satisfied.

At this moment the door opened and Charlie's mamma appeared, looking anxious.

"Oh, here you are, Rose, my child," she said. "Who would have thought to find you here! I was so worried. We have been looking for you all over the place. Have you been here all this beautiful afternoon, you poor little thing?" She looked reproachfully at Charlie.

"I wanted to stay here," said Rose cheerfully. "But I am glad it is time to come out now."



“Come, then, Dearie; you must be very hungry,” said Charlie’s mother, taking Rose’s hand and leading her towards the door. But Rose hung back.

“You come too, Charlie,” she smiled.

“Mamma,” said Charlie bravely, “I am sorry I was naughty to Rose. I have just told her so. She is a *brick*, and I wish she was going to be my truly sister always. For the rest of her visit I am going to make her have the best time she ever knew.”

Then the supper bell rang again, anxiously, and the two children took hold of hands, scampering down the stairs like hungry puppies when they hear their master’s whistle.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE GARDEN OF LIVE FLOWERS

**A**FTER Kenneth recovered from the scarlet fever and Rose came back to the city, the Thornton family went away for the summer to their island down in Maine, which the children loved better than any other place in the whole world.

It was a very wonderful island, and though Kenneth and Rose had gone down there as many years as they could remember, they were continually finding something new which they had never seen before. They liked to play that it was a desert island and that they were Robinson Crusoes who were exploring to see what they might find. And they were always hoping to come upon a mysterious footprint, or something like that.

One particular day they were scrambling about on the rocks, a long way from the foot



of the cliff on which perched their summer home. They had never before happened to climb down to this particular spot, because it was such a steep scramble. From the top of the cliff it did not look interesting at all. I dare say nobody had ever before been on that part of the island, except perhaps the Prout children, who lived not far away all the year round. It was a bad landing-place; no boat could ever come in from the sea on account of the big waves that dashed up on the sharp rocks. And nobody would ever have thought of scrambling down the cliff and over those rough boulders unless, like Columbus, he was an adventurous explorer looking to see what he might find. But you see, that is just what Kenneth and Rose were. They were explorers, and they had their eyes wide open to see what there might be in this new place.

They hopped over the little rocks and climbed over the big ones; they crawled over some and slid down others which were very slippery. For the tide had gone out, and here



and there the rocks held little pools which the sun had not dried.

There were shells and seaweed and starfish in these pools, but the children did not stop to gather them, for they had seen others just like them often before. They scrambled on towards a big, big rock that stood up right across the way between the cliff and the foamy water.

“We can’t go any further,” said Rose.

“Oh, we must go further,” answered Kenneth. “Perhaps there is some big discovery just beyond. Why, Rose, supposing Columbus had stopped the first time he was discouraged, he would never have discovered America. And then where should we be now?”

Rose could not answer that question. So they decided to go on. Kenneth helped Rose and Rose helped Kenneth, and they scrambled and climbed and puffed and panted, and bumped their knees on the rock, which was the hardest one that they had ever climbed. But at last they came to the top; and beyond,



down below, was a flat rock which the tide had just washed clean as a spandy floor.

“Pooh!” said Kenneth. “I don’t think *that* is very much to find. I hoped there would be at least a cave.”

“Let’s go down,” said Rose. “I think it looks nice. See, there is a shelf over the edge. Perhaps there is a cave or something under this big rock. I want to go down and see.”

So they began to slide and scramble again; and it is a great deal easier to slide down than up, as every one knows. In a very few moments Kenneth landed on all fours on the flat shelf of rock, and in another minute Rose bumped down beside him. And then Rose said “Oh!”

Now perhaps you think that she said “Oh!” because she had bumped her little nose on the hard rock. But that was not the reason. Rose scarcely ever cried, even when she bumped herself hard, for she was a brave little girl, the nicest kind of a sister for a boy to have.

No; Rose said “Oh!” because she had



made a discovery. There was something under the shelf of rock down which they had slid. There was a pool of water ; a long, shallow pool of sea-water as cold as ice, into which Rose had plunged her foot. But that was not all. It was a tiny, beautiful sea garden full of flowers.

Kenneth cried " Oh ! " too, when he saw where Rose was pointing, and in a minute the two children were lying flat on their stomachs staring at the wonderful garden. My ! But I wish you could have seen how wonderful it was. I must try to tell you how it looked.

In the first place, the bottom of the basin, the rocky pool in which some of the sea-water had been glad to linger when the rest ran away with the tide, — this bowl was of a brilliant pink, bright as Rose's own pink cheeks. It was covered with a thick painted coating like coral, and I suppose some kind of little animal like a coral-creature had made it so. In the next place, up from the pinkness grew tiny plants of seaweed, green and brown and yel-



low, branching and spreading out like little trees and bushes, and waving in the water just as trees do in the wind. Among the seaweed lived pink and purple and yellow starfish and little crawling periwinkles carrying their shell houses upon their backs. Here and there a funny little hermit-crab scuttled busily about, keeping tightly hold of the shell which he had stolen to be his home. Among the leaves of the seaweed trees Rose spied a tiny conger eel moving to and fro, waving his fins as though they were wings, this queer ocean bird!

But what made Kenneth and Rose cry "Oh, oh, oh!" three times out loud and clap their hands with joy, was the living flowers.

Living flowers! You have read in fairy-books about flowers that came alive? But this is no fairy-story, and these flowers were real, truly live flowers, — flowers that were happy and hungry, that ate and drank and moved, opening and closing whenever they chose.

Some of the flowers were brown, — little brown sacks, with a daisy flower growing out of



the end, waving its petals to and fro to catch its dinner of tiny unseen things that live in the water. Some of the flowers were green, some were yellowish pink, some pale greenish blue. And they were all wide open under the water, staring up through it at the blue sky.

One flower was like a little ripe, red strawberry, growing from the roof of the cave; just the size and shape of a juicy strawberry, and looking good enough to eat. Each blue flower-star had a white centre, and when Rose put her little finger down very carefully into this mouth, it closed its petals tightly, for it thought it had found a nice bit of dinner. It was a funny, tickly feeling, and Rose drew away her finger quickly, but very gently so as not to hurt the sea-flower. Then Kenneth put his finger into the mouth of one of the pinkish flowers, and the petals did not move. He tickled the flower gently, and it seemed to like the feeling, which I dare say was as new to the flower as the flower was to Kenneth. For the children had never before seen a garden of live flowers.





LIVING FLOWERS







For a long time they lay and watched the wonderful little pool and the beautiful flowers, that moved their petals so gracefully in the water. And they never noticed that a storm was gathering out to sea. But by and by they saw that the flowers were closing one by one, closing tightly and not opening again.

“Why, what makes the flowers go to sleep?” cried Rose sorrowfully. “It is not night yet, and garden flowers do not close till the sun sets.”

“It is growing dark,” said Kenneth. “There is a cloud coming over the sun.”

Sure enough! A heavy cloud rolled over the sun, and all the sea-flowers closed their eyes tightly, just as earth-flowers do at night. Then Kenneth and Rose sat up and looked around. My! They were surprised! A heavy fog was rolling in from sea, and it was going to rain very soon. They had been so interested in the flowers that they had not thought of this.

“Oh, it is going to rain!” cried Rose.



“The flowers have warned us just in time. Let us hurry home, Kenneth, before the fog shuts down so that we cannot see the way.” For they knew how cruel the fogs were about the island, so thick and heavy that the fishermen themselves were afraid of being caught in them, and of losing the way home.

The children jumped up and said good-by to the beautiful garden. Then they climbed, slid, hopped, and scrambled back over the rocks towards home, racing with the storm. And they reached the house just as the first drops of rain began to fall. They rushed up onto the piazza, where their mamma was looking anxiously for them.

“Oh, Mamma,” they cried both together, “we have seen a garden of live flowers.”

“Pink and blue and red!” cried Rose.

“And they closed tight so as to let us know that the storm was coming,” said Kenneth.

“What, you have found a pool of sea-anemones?” cried their mother, delighted. “I



am so glad! I did not know there were any on this island."

"And will you come with us to-morrow to see them?" begged Rose. "We will show you, but it is going to be a great secret. Sh! Don't let any one hear!"

"I am not a good climber," said their mother, shaking her head. "I am afraid I cannot get down that steep cliff. But you must take your Aunt Claire, who is coming to-morrow. She will love to go with you, I know."

"Oh, is Aunt Claire coming to-morrow? Hurray!" cried Kenneth. For the children thought that their Aunt Claire was great fun.

"Oh, yes! We will take Aunt Claire to see the flowers," said Rose. "But we must n't tell any one else."

"Yes, you must keep the discovery a great secret," said their mamma. "Some one might want to transplant the little flowers, and that would be a great pity. You must let them live there in their own sea-garden just as they



are. But what clever little explorers you were to find them !”

And, indeed, it is not every one who can discover a garden of live flowers outside a fairy-book. But this was nicer than any fairy-book, as their Aunt Claire said when Kenneth and Rose showed it to her the very next day after she came to the island. And she ought to know, for she writes fairy-books and tells stories better than any one else, so the children think.



## CHAPTER X

### BURIED TREASURE

ONE day Kenneth and his father went out fishing with Captain Prout. Rose and Aunt Claire did not care to go, because they did not enjoy fishing. But instead they decided to spend the morning on the sandy beach, not far from the cottage, which was a grand play-room and bathing-place for the children. It was the only sandy beach on that rocky island.

Rose ran ahead of her Aunt Claire, and as soon as she reached the beach she sat down to pull off her shoes and stockings. For in this lovely play-room she never wore shoes, nor even sandals, but ran around with bare toes on the smooth, soft floor, making funny little tracks just as the sandpipers do. But of course Rose's footprints were larger than their three-toed ones.



When they reached the beach they saw that the tide was very low, and that the sand stretched out like a great sheet of paper, smooth and white, without a mark upon it, from the seaweed line to the water. For it was early in the morning, and they were the very first persons on the spot. Yesterday they had made houses of sand and had dug deep wells all up and down the beach. But in the night the sea had stolen up and swept everything smooth again, even wiping out the tracks of feet which had crossed and criss-crossed it everywhere,— Aunt Claire's tennis shoes, Kenneth's and Rose's little bare footprints, the deep tread of the clam-digger's rubber boots, and the sandpipers' light steps. The beach looked like a field covered with newly fallen snow on which nothing has yet made a mark.

Then Aunt Claire, who was always having splendid ideas, thought of a lovely game to play upon this smooth whiteness.

“Oh, Rose,” she cried, “let us play a new





THE SAND STRETCHED OUT LIKE A GREAT SHEET OF PAPER







kind of hide-and-seek. I will shut my eyes, and you take this pretty whirly-shell which we found yesterday and hide it somewhere in the sand. Then I will try to find it by following the track of your bare feet."

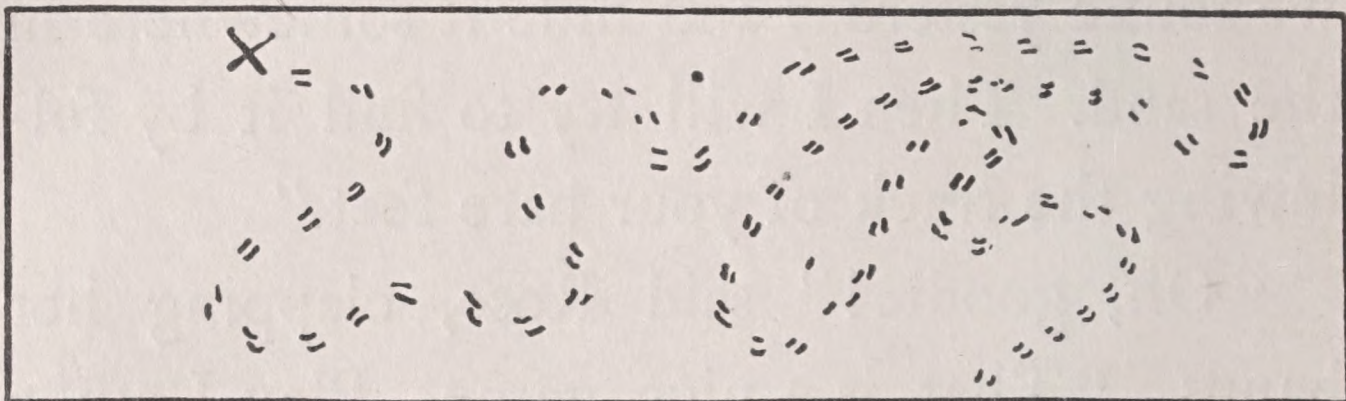
"Oh, goodie!" said Rose, clapping her hands. "That is a nice game. Play I am a pirate going to hide my treasure in the ground, and you are another pirate hunting for it. Blind your eyes, Auntie. Blind them tight, and don't you peek!"

Aunt Claire blinded her eyes and waited until she heard Rose call, "Coo!" like a pirate. Then she looked up, and Rose was standing in the deep, soft sand not very far away. But Aunt Claire knew that she had not hidden the treasure so near. Oh, no! Rose was too sly a pirate to do that.

Aunt Claire peered all around very carefully, and finally she spied the marks of little bare toes in the sand near the spot where Rose had stood when they first began to play. And she followed the tracks down to the water and



up again, winding about in the funniest way,  
— something like this:—

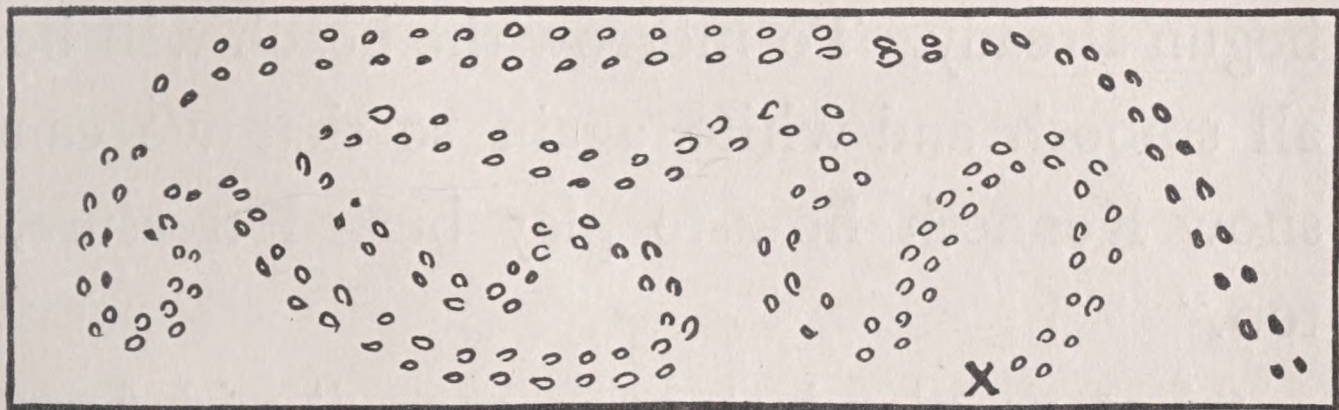


Up and down and round about, twisting in and out, went the funny little marks, till Aunt Claire's head whirled dizzily. Rose clapped her hands and laughed to see her trying to set her tennis shoes exactly in the track of those crazy wanderings. But at last, close by the water's edge, Aunt Claire saw a little something which rose up like a bump on the sand; and about it were the marks of finger-scrapings. She stooped down and dug with her fingers, and soon she cried: "I spy!" and held up the pretty shell which Rose had hidden. "The treasure is found!" said Aunt Claire. "But what a search you made for me, wicked Pirate!"

"It is a lovely game," said Rose, hopping



up and down with excitement. "Now *you* hide, Aunt Claire." Rose put her hands over her eyes, and her auntie came back to the soft sand in order to start fair on a smooth piece of beach. Pretty soon she cried, "Coo!" And the marks of her shoes looked something like this:—



"Oh, I never, never can find the treasure in all that whirly-whirly!" cried Rose, shaking her curls like a Skye terrier. And indeed, it looked very hard. But Rose walked right along in the big prints of her auntie's shoes, and without much trouble she found the shell where it was hidden in the middle of the whirly-figure.

"That was a good hide," she said.

They played the pirate game for a long time, until the sand was covered up and down with



the strangest patterns, and there was hardly room for a fresh footprint anywhere; for this was not a large beach.

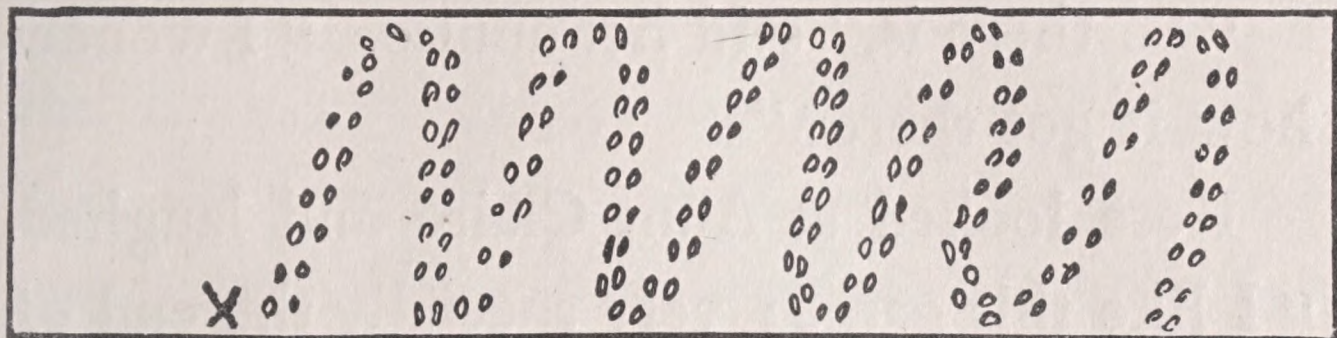
“We shall have to stop, now, I suppose,” said Rose with a sigh, “and wait until Mr. Sea has washed out all our marks with his ocean sponge. See, he is creeping up and has begun already. To-morrow the beach will be all smooth and white again so that we can show Kenneth how to play buried treasure, too.”

“Let us play just once more,” said Aunt Claire. “It is my turn to hide the treasure, and I think I can find a place which will not be too hard, all among these markings. Blind your eyes, little Pirate.”

“All right,” said Rose, who was a very good-natured pirate. And she closed her eyes.

Now there was not much smooth sand for Aunt Claire to walk in, but she managed to go up and down the beach in a funny parallel-lined pattern, like this: —





And when she called, "Coo," Rose started off upon the trail, laughing every time she turned the sharp corner and came back upon the long stretch up or down.

At last she came to the little bubbly mound in the sand where Aunt Claire had hidden the treasure. She stooped over and her yellow curls swept the sand as she thrust in all her ten fingers with a shout of triumph. Presently she jumped up with the treasure in her hand and stood still, examining it curiously. Then she gave a squeal of joy and came racing up the beach to her auntie, with her curls flying madly.

"Why, Aunt Claire," she cried, "it is a really, truly treasure, this time! See what was hidden inside the whirly-shell!" and she held up a bright ten-cent piece which she had pulled out of the little treasure-box.



“So there is,” said her auntie. “I wonder how it got there?”

Rose looked at Aunt Claire and laughed. “I like this game; very specially the end of it,” she said. “Now what shall we do next, Auntie?”

“We can’t play here any more,” said Aunt Claire. “The beach is so marked up that if a pirate should hide his treasure here he might never be able to find it again. I would not risk mine, if I were you.”

“No, I suppose I had better not,” said Rose, shaking her head. “I think I ought to keep the money for the game to-morrow, shouldn’t I, Auntie?” she added, rather wistfully.

“Oh, no!” said Aunt Claire. “A pirate would never do that. You must go up to the store and change it for merchandise. That is what pirates always did in the old days.”

“What is merchandise?” asked Rose brightening. Then with a sudden thought, “Is candy merchandise?” And Aunt Claire said that it was.



“Well, then, you must come with me to the store and share,” said Rose, pulling her auntie by the hand. And away both pirates went to the little village store which was about a mile from the cottage.

“I think it is lovely to be a pirate!” cried Rose, as she danced along the road with the ten-cent piece in her hand. “I am going to be a pirate every single day.”

“Oh, not every day,” said her auntie, in dismay. “The pirates did not go pirating every day, or there would not have been treasure enough to last. They did other things between whiles.”

“I suppose they could n’t go pirating when it rained,” said Rose thoughtfully. “Perhaps it may rain to-morrow.”

And it did.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE PIECED BABY

**F**OR a long time Rose had been wanting a little sister. Kenneth was the very best brother that ever lived, and they had beautiful times playing together. But Kenneth was growing to be a big boy, and he liked a great many things that Rose did not enjoy, — fishing, for instance, which made her very ill. And there were things which Rose liked that Kenneth would not play with her. Rose thought if only she had a little sister they two would like just the same sort of things. They could play dolls together, and house, and tea-party, and have the most beautiful times when Kenneth was away doing something very different.

Rose had waited a long time for the little sister. She had spoken to her papa and mamma



about it months before, and they had said that perhaps some time there would come a little sister for her. Rose thought that Christmas would be a very nice time for the sister to come. But although Santa Claus was very kind and had brought two little kittens to Christine, the Christmas cat, and had brought Alice, her beautiful new doll, to Rose herself, there had been no baby sister in mamma's stocking nor in papa's.

Rose was almost tired of waiting. She wanted the little sister so much that one morning, when Kenneth had gone to dig clams with Captain Prout, she cried all by herself out in the woods behind the house, — cried as if her heart would break. Her Aunt Claire found her there, and asked her what was the matter. Then Rose told her all about it.

“Have you asked the fairies to help you?” said Aunt Claire sympathetically. Rose said that she had forgotten to do that.

“Well, I would do so, if I were you,” said Aunt Claire gravely. “One never knows what



may happen if you can only get the fairies to help."

Rose thought over what her auntie had said all that day, and she resolved to ask the fairies to help her at the very first chance she had. She sometimes saw them, when she woke up between dreams at night, and she hoped that very soon she should meet her friends again. It happened sooner than she expected.

That very night, when she had not been asleep very long, she was suddenly awakened by a little silvery laugh. And when she opened her eyes to see what had laughed, there in the moonlight at the foot of her bed stood a beautiful Fairy in a silver dress.

"Why, Rose, what are you crying about?" said the Fairy.

"Was I crying?" said Rose. "I did not know it."

"Yes," said the Fairy. "You were crying in your sleep, sobbing so hard that I heard you away off in Fairyland. So I knew something very sad must be troubling you, and I





AWAKENED BY A LITTLE SILVERY LAUGH







came just as quickly as I could to my little friend. What is it, Rose ? What is the matter ? ”

The Fairy spoke so kindly that Rose began to cry again.

“ Oh, I do so want a little sister ! ” she sobbed.

“ Well, why don't you go about to get one ? ” asked the Fairy.

“ I don't know how, ” said Rose, blinking the tears in wonder. “ Where can I find one, dear Fairy ? ”

“ You can't find a whole baby, ” said the Fairy, “ but you must gather her in little pieces. Then perhaps my fairies will put her together for you, like a patchwork quilt. ”

“ I never heard of such a thing ! ” exclaimed Rose indignantly. “ I don't want a pieced little sister, I want a nice whole one. ”

“ Oh, very well, ” returned the Fairy Queen carelessly, “ but I'll tell you a secret. They are *all* pieced that way, though nobody knows it. The seams never show, we take such fine,



fine stitches. But the pieces must be carefully chosen. Have n't you noticed how some babies have a nose which does n't belong with the chin, or unmatched eyes, or ears which are not a truly pair? You must do better than that, Rose. You must choose carefully, so that your little sister will be symmetrical and even, —the same on both sides."

"Oh, can I really do it?" cried Rose eagerly, sitting up in bed. "When may I begin?"

"Begin now," said the Fairy. "I suppose you would like to have the little sister as soon as possible?"

"I would like her to-morrow!" cried Rose, jumping out of bed. "But how shall I begin? Will you not help me?"

"I cannot help you to collect the pieces," answered the Fairy, "but I will give you a hint. You might begin with a *face* for your little sister; and why not go to the clock for that?" So saying the Fairy suddenly disappeared.

"Go to the clock!" Rose gasped, "how



very strange !” Then she looked up at the tall old clock that faced her bed, and in the moonlight the face seemed to be smiling at her. “It’s a queer face for a baby sister to have,” thought Rose, “but the Fairy ought to know. I will begin as she told me.” So she peeled the pillowcase from her pillow to make a good big bag for the pieces which she was to collect. Then she went up to the clock and said politely, — for he was an old friend of hers, — “Please, Clock, I want your face to begin a baby sister.” Then she took off the face and put it in the bottom of the pillowcase bag.

“Now what must my little sister have next ?” wondered Rose. “*Eyes*, of course ! But where shall I find eyes ?” Just then her own eyes happened to spy the pincushion on the bureau. “To be sure ! Needles have eyes. I will borrow two for my sister.” And into the bundle went two needles. But Rose was careful that they should be just alike, as the Fairy had warned.



“Now I want a *nose*,” thought Rose. “What has a nose? Oh — a kettle.” And very quietly, so as not to waken any one in the house, she ran down into the kitchen, took the nose from the teakettle, and put that in the bag.

“A *mouth*; I must have a mouth next. Oh, yes, a bottle has a mouth,” said Rose. She found one in the pantry, and its round mouth went into the bundle with the eyes and nose. But there must be a *tongue* to go in the mouth. Rose thought and thought; but at last she remembered that there was a tongue in her shoe, and that was added to the collection.

“What about a *head*? She needs that for her face, her eyes and nose and mouth; I forgot her head!” cried Rose. “Let me think. Why, yes, a head of lettuce, — that is what I want.” And because it was summer, warm and pleasant out of doors, Rose skipped right out in her nightie and bare feet. The vegetable garden was behind the house, and there Rose picked out a round head of lettuce, which she added to her funny bundle.



The garden made her think of something else. The baby must have *ears*, and where should one look for ears if not in the cornfield? So away she tripped to the cornfield, where for weeks she had been watching the ears of corn grow plumper every day. Here she carefully selected two pretty ears, just alike.

“And now the little sister is ready and trimmed as far as her neck,” thought Rose. “And for a *neck*, I know where I can find that. Mamma’s white vase on the parlor mantel has a beautiful neck.” So back to the house went Rose, and soon into the bundle with the other things went the white vase.

“Now let me see, baby must have a *body*. What is there that has a body? The body of a — the body of a — what have I heard? The body of a wagon; yes, that is it! But I can’t take Papa’s big wagon. A little one will be nicer for a baby. I will take the body of Kenneth’s express wagon,” and Rose pattered



softly to Kenneth's room, where the little red cart went into the fast-growing bundle.

Next Rose took the *arms* of a sofa, two *legs* of a chair, and two *feet* of a table. Then she went back to her own little room. "You poor old clock," she said to her now faceless friend, "I must rob you again. Please, I want your two *hands* for my little sister." And the clock had to give her his hands, whether he could spare them or not. Then Rose remembered that the baby must have *nails* on her hands and feet. So she tiptoed very softly into Mamma's room and got twenty nails from the little carpenter's chest which Mamma kept in her closet.

By this time the pillowcase had grown very heavy and hard to carry, like Santa Claus's wonderful pack. Moreover, Rose was tired, for she had been roaming around for a long time collecting the pieces of her little sister.

"I think I must have everything now," she sighed, sitting down on the edge of her bed. "Such a funny bundle! I hope little Sister will not look very queer with all these strange



kinds of features and things. I wish the Queen of the Fairies would come and tell me what to do next."

Just at that moment Rose blinked and stopped talking, for in at the window on a ray of moonlight came walking the Fairy Queen herself. She smiled at Rose and nodded when she saw the big bundle.

"Good!" she said. "You have done well. I hope that you have n't forgotten anything, for that would be awkward." Rose shook her head positively. "Very well," went on the Fairy, "now empty out your bundle upon the floor at the foot of the bed, put the pillow-case on the pillow and go to sleep. As soon as your eyes are closed tight I will see what my fairies can do with the pieces which you have collected. But mind, you must not peep."

"No, I promise not to peep," said Rose, and obediently she went to bed and closed her eyes tight, and before she knew it she was sound asleep.



Rose slept and slept and slept, later than usual. And it was not until the old clock called out, "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, *eight* !" that she opened her eyes with a pop and stared at him hard. How could a clock speak without a face? But there the old fellow stood, smiling at her as usual, with his hands pointing up and down quite correctly.

"Then it was only a dream after all!" sighed Rose, and there were two tears in her eyes as she thought of the little sister whom she had hoped to see this morning. "There was n't any Fairy Queen, and I did n't go about last night collecting eyes and ears and hands for a new baby. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Just then there was a knock on the door, and Papa came into the room. "Wake up, my little Rose," he said, "and see what I have to show you here! Something came in the night, something new and nice that you have wanted for a long time."

"Oh, Papa," gasped Rose, "what is it? Not a — not a little sister?"



Papa looked surprised. "Why, how did you guess, Rose?" he asked. "That is just what it is." And he beckoned to Eliza, Rose's own old nurse, who came into the room with a tiny bundle in her arms. And there, wrapped in soft flannel, was the pinkest, prettiest, cunningest little baby you ever saw!

"Oh, Papa!" cried Rose, clapping her hands. "It was n't a dream after all. I did collect the pieces. Oh, I am so glad!"

Papa looked puzzled, but Rose had no time now to explain about the Fairy Queen. She was too busy examining the little pink bundle to see if it was all there as she had planned. Yes, there were the eyes and ears, the little hands and nails, all quite evenly matched. This was no crooked, carelessly patched baby, this little sister of Rose's. The fairies had smoothed out all the pieces and made them beautiful, and, as the Queen had promised, there was not one seam to show how it had been done. Oh, how proud Rose was of the dear little nose and the pink mouth!



Suddenly her face clouded. The baby had opened its pink mouth wide to let out a babyish howl, and Rose saw a dreadful sight. There was not a single tooth there!

“Oh, oh!” cried Rose, “I forgot her *teeth*. And there was my comb lying on the bureau conveniently all the time. Oh, how careless I was! Poor little Sister!” and she burst out crying.

Nurse and Papa assured Rose that it was quite fashionable for a baby to be toothless at first; that the little sister’s teeth would come soon enough. But Rose could not believe it. She felt sure that she had spoiled the baby, who would never be quite finished like other children. It was only when, some months later, Papa and Nurse turned out to be right and Rose felt the little hard teeth pushing through the baby’s gums that she became quite happy and relieved.

“I think that this was the Fairy’s doings, too!” said Rose. And indeed, that did not seem more wonderful than the fact which



Rose could never explain, — that no one had missed the nose of the teakettle, nor the neck of Mamma's white vase, nor any of the other things which Rose had collected to piece the baby. For, like the clock's hands and face, they were all in place as usual the very next morning after that exciting night. But, as Aunt Claire said, of course it is useless trying to explain anything which has to do with the fairies. Is it not so?



## CHAPTER XII

### THE ALARM

ONE day Captain Prout said to Kenneth, “How ’d ye like to go out with me to-morrow morning to catch bait for my lobster traps? We ’ll have to start early, —right early for a little city feller like you. What do you say to four o’clock?”

“Oh, I can get up at four o’clock just as easily as at seven,” said Kenneth proudly; “of course I will go with you, Captain Prout.”

The Captain chuckled. “’T ain’t so easy as you think, to git up at sunrise, when you ain’t used to it,” he said; “but you kin set an alarm, I guess. You ask your father, an’ if he says you can go, I ’ll take you off from the beach in my boat to-morrow morning at four-fifteen; that is, pervided you ’re there, Sonny.”

Of course he would be there! Kenneth asked his father if he might go, and Mr.



Thornton was quite willing, for he knew that Captain Prout would be careful of the little boy. Kenneth did not tell his father how early he must start. But without troubling any one he set the alarm clock at four, and put it under the bed, so that it would be sure to waken him in due season.

Now, very early the next morning, when every one in the Thornton cottage was sleeping soundly, two little figures came walking up through the woods towards the back door. The little boy carried a pail of milk, and the little girl walked beside him, and they looked something like the children whom you see in the full moon, — Jack and Jill. But these were not Jack and Jill. They were Tommy and Mary Prout, Captain Prout's twins, and it happened to be their turn to bring the milk that morning to the Thornton cottage for Kenneth's and Rose's breakfast. I don't know what Kenneth and Rose would have done if the little Prouts had forgotten to come with the milk. But they never forgot, not once,



all summer. There were six of them — three boys and three girls — and every morning in July and August, whether it rained or shone, two of them came two miles from Lobster Cove with the milk. And they came very early, — so early that no one in the cottage ever saw them do it. They were glad of this, for they were very bashful. Whenever they were out in the woods or along the shore and heard any one coming, they always scuttled away and hid like little frightened animals.

Sometimes Kenneth and Rose spied one or two of these children running away through the woods, but they had scarcely ever seen their faces, and did not know one from another. They called them just “the little Prouts,” and thought them very queer.

But the little Prouts knew Kenneth and Rose much better. They often watched them from a distance, when Kenneth and Rose did not know. And they thought the Thornton children the most wonderful creatures that ever lived, and their toys and their doings the





THEY WERE TOMMY AND MARY PROUT







finest ever known. For you see, the little Prouts had no toys of their own, and were very different from Kenneth and Rose in every way, except in being little brothers and sisters.

Tommy and Mary, who were just the age of Kenneth, came stealing very quietly through the woods with the pail of milk, which they carried around to the back door and set upon the step, ready for Katie to take it when she came down to get breakfast. They had done their errand, and now were they not ready to tramp home? Oh, no! They stood for a minute listening, to be sure that no one was stirring in the cottage, and then very softly they tiptoed around to the front of the house, where the broad piazza was. Sometimes the city children left their toys all night out on the piazza. The little Prouts knew this, for they had often before done just this same thing in the early morning after their long tramp with the milk.

It was such a fine night that Rose had



swung her doll's hammock on the piazza, and Alice, her beautiful new doll, was sleeping here very sweetly. Rose had heard that it was good for children to sleep in the open air. Kenneth had left his express wagon and his rocking-horse out here, too.

The little Prouts stood at the foot of the piazza steps, staring up at these wonderful things.

At last Mary Prout reached out her hand and touched her brother. "Ain't I dreaming?" she said. "No, I ain't. But Tommy! Ain't they beautiful!"

Tommy took a step towards the piazza and paused, listening. There was no sound in the house. "Let's go up," he whispered. "No one will ever know. Come on."

The two children stole noiselessly up the steps and crept over the piazza to the sheltered nook where the toys were safe from the dew. Mary sank down on her knees beside Alice. "Oh, oh!" she breathed. "I never saw anything so beautiful!"



Tommy was looking eagerly at the rocking horse. "Oh, how I wish 't I dared ride on him, just once!" he thought. He reached out his hand to stroke the mane of the beautiful creature, the like of which he had never before seen. And at the same moment Mary stretched a trembling hand towards Alice's golden curls. Think of having a doll like that for your very own, to kiss and play with, and carry around wherever you went! If only she might have it in her arms just once, Mary felt that she should be happy all the rest of her days.

But just at that moment there came a terrible sound, "Pr-r-r-jingle-jangle! P-r-r-r-r! Jang-jang!" In the stillness it seemed to sound louder than the loudest thunder. Tommy started as if he had been shot. Poor Mary drew back her hand as if Alice's yellow curls had burned them. "Pr-r-r-jang-jang!" The dreadful noise continued, and it came from inside the house.

With one frightened leap Tommy and Mary



were down the piazza steps. Casting one wild look behind to see if they were being followed by the terrible creature that was growling to warn and punish them for daring to touch those precious treasures, they fled away like foxes across the garden and into the woods at the back of the house. Poor little frightened things! They thought that their early morning secret had been discovered, and never again would they dare to venture near that piazza which was the only fairyland that they knew.

Meanwhile what was going on inside the house? "Pr-r-r-jang-jang!" The alarm clock still buzzed away fiercely. Kenneth had wound it up as far as it would go, and for several minutes the bell rang, until every one in the house, except Kenneth himself, was wide awake.

Papa and Mamma woke up instantly. Mrs. Thornton's first thought was about the new baby. "Oh, John!" she cried, "has anything happened to the baby? Do call Eliza."



Mr. Thornton was already out of bed. "It can't be burglars," he said, "for we have n't any burglars down here on the island, nor any burglar alarm, either. Don't be frightened. I will go and look through the house."

In the hall he met Aunt Claire and the servants, shivering in their wrappers. "Oh, John," cried Aunt Claire, "is the house afire? I certainly heard a fire-alarm."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Thornton. "It must be some one pulling the door-bell." But when he went down to open the door, with the servants following in a frightened, huddled group, there was no one waiting outside. The piazza was empty. Only Alice swung peacefully in her hammock, seeming not the least frightened.

"It is very strange," muttered Mr. Thornton. "It certainly seemed to me inside the house."

In the hall outside the nursery he met old Eliza, the nurse.

"Have you been into Master Kenneth's



room?" she asked. "I thought the noise came from there, though I don't see how it could be so."

"It can't be, of course," said Mr. Thornton, but he went into Kenneth's room, where the boy was still sleeping soundly. It was just at this moment that Kenneth at last woke up.

"What is the matter?" he murmured, blinking sleepily. "What is the matter, Papa?"

"We heard a bell ring," said his father, "and Eliza thought that it came from here. Did you hear it?"

"No, Papa," said Kenneth drowsily, "I did n't hear any bell," and turning over he went fast asleep again. It was a quarter past four, and Captain Prout was just rowing away from the beach, where he had looked in vain for his little passenger.

"I knew he would forget to come!" he chuckled.

From Kenneth's room Mr. Thornton went to Rose's. He found her standing by the



window in her little blue wrapper, looking out towards the woods.

“Oh, Papa, what is it?” she said eagerly. “Do you think it was the fairies?”

“Fairies? Why, what makes you think it was fairies?” asked Mr. Thornton, “though I must confess that I don’t know what else it could have been.”

“I looked out of the window,” said Rose, “and I saw two little creatures run into the woods as fast as they could go. One was a little girl and one was a little boy, and I think they were fairies who had been ringing our door-bell.”

“Pooh-pooh! Fairies don’t ring door-bells,” said her father. “And at this time in the morning it isn’t likely that any of the island children were ringing our bell and running away, as the naughty boys do in the city sometimes. I don’t understand it at all. But the noise has stopped, so let us finish our naps, as Kenneth is doing. He is the wisest of us all, not to bother his head about it.”



And so they all went back to bed and slept soundly until breakfast time.

At the breakfast table the first thing Kenneth said was, —

“Oh, goodness me! I was going to fish with Captain Prout at four o'clock in the morning. But I didn't wake up. How he will laugh at me! But why didn't my alarm clock go off?”

“*Alarm clock?*” said his father. “So you set the alarm, did you? Well, that accounts for everything. What a sleepy head you are, Kenneth!”

Yes, that accounted for everything, except for Rose's fairies. They never were accounted for. And indeed, those poor little fairies never again dared visit that scene of their terrible early-morning alarm.



## CHAPTER XIII

### BROTHERS AND SISTERS

THE summer passed away only too quickly, as summers do, and almost before the children knew it the fall had come, and it was time to go back to the city to school. It was very hard for Kenneth and Rose to leave the island, with all its beautiful playgrounds and wonderful playthings, so different from what one has in the city. And yet it was pleasant to be back in the city, too, to see all their little friends again, and to begin new studies at school. Kenneth and Rose soon forgot to long for the beach, and the rocks, and the woods behind their little summer home, they were so happy in their other home in the city. They scarcely ever thought of the island nowadays, and when they did it seemed very far away and unreal, almost like an island in a dream. They forgot that there were people



still living there to whom this was the only home; people who would be there all through the long winter, when the rough winds would sweep through those evergreen trees, *whew!* so loudly, and the waves would dash up over the bare rocks, *splash!* so fiercely, while all the island lay cold and dreary and deserted, wrapped in a blanket of snow.

One rainy Saturday morning Mrs. Thornton was dusting the shelves in the playroom closet, where the children's books lived. "Oh, dear!" she sighed, "It is such a bother to take care of all these old magazines! I wish I knew some one who would like these papers after you children have finished reading them."

"All the other children have more books of their own than they can read," said Kenneth.

"I know it," said his mother. "But there might be *some one* who would be so glad to have the pictures and stories, if only we could know."



Rose was playing with her dolls in the window-seat, when she had a sudden idea.

“Mamma!” she cried, clapping her hands. “Why can’t we send them away off down to the island where the little Prouts live? Don’t you think the little Prouts would like the magazines?”

“That is a good idea, Rose,” said her mother. “I fancy the poor little things never see a magazine. They will be sure to like the pictures, anyway, whether they can read or not. I wonder if any of them can read?”

“I don’t know what their names are,” said Rose, “but there are ever so many of them, boys and girls. Mamma, I should like to send my magazine to the little girl Prouts.”

“And I will send mine to the Prout boys,” said Kenneth promptly. “Won’t they be glad to see it coming, every week?”

“Yes, indeed they will,” said Mrs. Thornton. “And you must be sure not to disappoint them. If you are going to send the magazines at all, I want you to do it regu-



larly, every week. It will be a good practice lesson in remembering. Promise not to forget, children, if I let you send the papers this time?"

"We promise, Mamma, we promise," said Kenneth and Rose. And that promise was the beginning of a very interesting thing.

Every week after that, when they had finished reading their two magazines, Kenneth and Rose rolled them up, each in brown stamped wrapper, and Rose wrote on hers in big letters, "The Misses Prout," and Kenneth wrote on his "The Masters Prout," and they sent them away down to the island in Maine. It was n't much trouble to do that. But my! you should have seen what pleasure it gave the little Prouts.

All the year round, in summer and in winter, too, the little Prouts lived with their father, Captain Prout, in a tiny cottage on the island, close beside the sea. It was a very nice place in the summer; for then, like Kenneth and Rose, they were happy all day long,



playing out of doors, fishing and picking berries. But best of all, they enjoyed carrying the milk to the Thornton cottage on the cliff, two miles away. For then they sometimes had a peep at the wonderful things which the strangers had brought to the island, and at the two children playing at games which were so different from any ever before seen thereabout. The little Prouts used almost to quarrel over their turns to carry the milk.

But in the fall the summer people sailed away. Then the little Prouts went to school for a time, as they did in the spring; and that was pleasant, too. But in the winter there was no school, because of the cold and the deep snow, and the long road which the island children had to travel to the schoolhouse in the village. Also it was hard to get a teacher for these bitter winter months. The winters were lonely enough for the little Prouts. They seldom saw any other children, and there was not much for them to do except housework and patchwork and knitting, and help-



ing father to mend nets and make lobster-pots for the next summer.

The little Prouts had few playthings. They hardly knew what playthings were. They had seen Kenneth's express wagon and rocking horse, and Rose's beautiful dolls on the piazza of the cottage. They had almost dared to touch the wonderful things one early morning; but a terrible alarm had warned them away, so they knew that these marvelous and lovely things were not meant for children like themselves. They thought that the city people were a different kind of creature.

Tom and Mary and Susan knew how to read, but they had no books. On the island people did not read much, because there were no books. In some houses there was not even a Bible. There was no public library. There was no Sunday-school library, for there was not even a church on the island. In summer a minister came there to spend his vacation, and he preached every Sunday on the hill-top near the village. But in winter every one,



even the minister, seemed to forget the island. The little Prouts were very ignorant, and they wondered if the Lord himself forgot the island in the dreary months of snow and cold.

“Of course He forgets,” said Tommy, when they were talking about it one day. “He lives in the city, and comes down here only in the summer, just as the city people do.”

“But He must remember us,” sighed little Polly. “The minister said He was our Father.”

“Pooh!” said Tommy scornfully. “He ain’t our Father, either! You know he ain’t. He is *their* Father in heaven. I heard them talking to Him, one day, on the hill.”

“But the minister said He was everybody’s Father, Tommy,” answered Mary wistfully.

“But how *can* He be?” argued Tommy. “He is the Father of Kenneth and Rose Thornton, and of people like them who live in the city. He can’t be our Father, too; for if He was, we should be the brothers and



sisters of Kenneth and Rose. And you know we ain't that."

"Oh, no! We ain't that!" echoed all the little Prouts sadly, and then they were silent for a long time. The little girls sighed, and their lips trembled. They admired Rose Thornton more than anybody they had ever seen. Many and many a time when Rose did not know it, the little Prout girls were peeping at her from behind some big tree in the woods or rock on the shore; wondering at her long, golden curls and at her pretty, pink skin, which never seemed to grow brown and rough like theirs, and at the simple little dresses, which seemed wonderfully beautiful to them. Rose's blue cambric frock with the red leather belt and red hair-ribbon was their favorite.

The Prout boys thought that Kenneth was the most wonderful person, with his bicycle and his Indian suit and bow and arrows. But they never dreamed of speaking to Rose or to Kenneth. They were ashamed even to



be seen by them, and always ran away and hid, especially after that terrible morning of the early alarm. Oh, no! Of course these children could not be their brothers and sisters!

It was at the end of that very same day, the longest, dreariest day of early winter, when the little Prouts had agreed that the Father had forgotten the island, that the magazines began to come. Tim Parks drove four miles from the village to bring them, he was so curious to know who could have been sending things to "The Masters Prout" and "The Misses Prout." For no one had ever before sent any mail to the Prout family. These were postmarked from the city, too!

"Something for the Masters Prout, and something for the Misses Prout!" he called out as he pushed open the door. "I thought I'd jest bring 'em over for ye." And he handed the packages to Tommy and Mary.

What an excitement there was then! They tore open the wrappers, and behold! A boy's



magazine and a girl's magazine, full of pictures and stories. The children danced around, shouting and laughing. Somebody had sent them papers from the city! They were not quite forgotten!

"Who sent 'em? That is what I want to know," said Tim Parks.

But there was no word or scrap of writing to tell, and Tim could not find out what he longed to know.

"Wall, I guess they jest came from the magazine shop," said Tim at last, as he went out of the door. But the children looked at one another. They knew better.

"You said He had forgotten, and He sent these to show He has n't," whispered Mary to Tom. And the children looked at the papers with a feeling of awe and pride.

What continued joy there was for the little Prouts in those generous pages! Mary and Tom read every word aloud to the others, and to the whole family; for the father and mother were as much interested as the chil-



dren. There was a continued story, and that was the most exciting of all. For it was one of the best stories that Aunt Claire had ever written. But, alas! it stopped short at the most thrilling part.

“Oh, dear!” cried Mary, when she had read the last word aloud to her big-eyed audience. “Why does it stop? Now we shall never know how the Princess got out of the Giant’s castle!”

Those papers lasted the little Prouts for a whole week. And they had not begun to tire of them when — another set of magazines came! Captain Prout happened to go to the village that day, and Tim Parks came running out to him from the post-office.

“More mail for the Misses and the Masters Prout, Cap’n!” he called. “I guess your children are goin’ to have ’em come reg’lar. Ain’t it wonderful who sends ’em?”

What a shriek of joy went up from the little Prouts when they saw what Father brought them that night! “Now we shall



know about the Princess!" cried Mary, and they could hardly wait for supper to be over before they continued the wonderful tale. This part was to be continued also; but there was no such wail of anguish when the last word was read.

"Oh, I's sorry it's done," sighed little Polly; "but I guess the rest will come next week. Don't you?"

And somehow, even Tommy was hopeful this time. "Yes, I guess He has n't forgotten us, quite," he confessed to Mary before they went to bed.

If only Kenneth and Rose could have seen what joy their story papers gave to the little Prouts! Every week through all that bitter winter, in sun or in shine, through snow and sleet, as regularly as a Saturday came, one of the Prouts tramped four miles to the village for the precious magazines. And always the other little Prouts were waiting breathlessly for him to return, fearful lest this time the papers might not have come. They were





-Ethel C. Brown-

WHAT A SHRIEK OF JOY WENT UP







always looking out of the window, a row of little heads, one above another.

“Did it come?” they would cry, making signs of eager question as soon as the messenger appeared in sight, and he would shout and wave the two wrappers over his head, whereat all the children would begin to jump up and down with joy.

It would have been a dreadful thing if Kenneth or Rose had once forgotten to send the papers. But they never did, though they could not guess how much depended upon their remembering that simple little promise which they had made.

No, Kenneth and Rose could not possibly know what the sharing of that single one of their pleasures meant to the little Prouts, and to all the other island children besides, — for in the end the whole island saw the magazines. They were passed on from family to family all that winter, and were literally worn to rags by the thumbing of many little fingers, and big ones, too.



The Prouts were learning a great deal about many things, nowadays. It was almost as good as going to school. All that winter they lived in a new world of constant change. The little cottage was no longer dreary or lonely. Their stupid tasks were no longer tiresome, for they had the beloved magazines to read when all was done. They had the children of those stories for their companions and friends, and they began to understand, ever so dimly, that all the children of the world are little brothers and sisters to one another.



## CHAPTER XIV

### TOMMY'S LETTER

ONE day they were talking about it, all together.

“God is our Father, as the preacher said,” declared Mary. “I read it to-day in the magazine, don’t you remember?”

“Yes,” agreed Tommy, “it must be He who sends the papers to us, for nobody else knows about us. But He knows everything, — the preacher said so.”

“I wish we could thank Him,” said little Polly. “He has been so good not to forget us.”

“I am going to write to Him,” said Tommy suddenly; “there is a Letter-Box in the paper, and boys and girls write to it every week. I am going to write and tell the Lord how we thank Him.”

And forthwith Tommy sat down and wrote



to the magazine a letter something like those which he read every week in the Letter-Box, —yet different. An island letter would have to be different. This is what Tommy wrote:

LUCKY ISLAND, MAINE.

DEAR MAGAZINE, —You kum evry weak, an i dono ow we got long witout You. The aint nobody in the Sity to tel You how to get to This jumpin-of plais, so we no that Our Father must send You evry weak. An we wanten Thanx him but we dono ow. Plee put this Leter in the Leterbox sos he wil see. He dont kum here in Wintr its so lonsum I gess he wood be glad if he knu ow hapy he made 6 litl chilren way down in Maine. I hop he will send it evr an evr we havnt nothin els to red.

Yours truly,

TOMMY PROUT.

The editor of the magazine did not often print a letter spelled as badly as this one of poor Tommy Prout, who was eight years old,



but who only went to school in the spring and fall. But when the editor read that letter he blew his nose and wiped his glasses and said : —

“ Yes, I ’ll print your letter just as it is, Tommy Prout, and I think it will please Him whom you wish to thank, even if some one else mails the paper for Him every week.”

So that is why, some days later, when Kenneth Thornton was carelessly cutting the leaves of his new magazine, he suddenly gave a surprised whistle. The name of his beloved summer island had caught his eye, at the head of a letter in the Letter-Box.

“ Oh, Mamma,” he cried, “ see, here is a letter from our island. And it is signed, ‘ Tommy Prout.’ But I can’t make out the funny spelling.”

Then Kenneth’s mamma read the letter aloud, and it did not sound so queer as it looked. When she had finished there were tears in her eyes and in Rose’s, too. And Kenneth was winking queerly.



“The dear little fellow!” said Mamma. “Just think what it means to them to have those papers that you don’t care for. O children, our Father surely did put it into your heads to send the magazines; so Tommy is right.”

“And we will send them ‘ever and ever,’ as Tommy hopes, won’t we, Kenneth?” cried Rose eagerly.

“Course we will,” said Kenneth promptly.

“I’d like to write a letter to the little girl Prouts,” mused Rose. “It must be awfully lonesome on the island in winter.”

“We must wait till next summer, Rose dear,” said her mamma. “We have been bad neighbors to those little children, and we must get acquainted with them first. The little Prouts do not know us, and it is our fault. But another summer we will know them. And then we will plan what we can do to make their winters less lonely. Poor babies!”

“I’d like to send them a Christmas box,”



said Kenneth, who had been thinking all this time. "I'll send the boys a lot of books and candy and things."

"And I'll send some to the girls," cried Rose, clapping her hands. "Oh! That will be fine, — and a doll for each one."

"That is a good plan," said Mrs. Thornton. "We will certainly do it. How selfish we have been to care for our beautiful island only while we were there, and to forget our neighbors who live there all the year through! Just think, Kenneth and Rose, those children believe that our Father does n't come there in winter. We must change that, and show them that He is watching all His children all the time."

Kenneth and Rose had a beautiful time making ready that Christmas box. Into it they put all the things that they had first thought of, and a great many beside. And they sent it so that it reached the island on Christmas eve. Tim Parks brought it over to the Prouts the next morning.



“I guess your friend who sends you the magazines has sent you something fine for Christmas,” he grinned, as he carried the heavy box into the room where the six little Prouts stood gaping with wonder. “‘The Misses and the Masters Prout!’” he cried, reading the label.

Mary squeezed Tommy’s hand and whispered something as they all crowded around while the box was being opened. And Tommy nodded wisely.

On the top of the box, inside, was a card which read: “Merry Christmas to the little Prouts, from a brother and a sister who read Tommy’s letter in the Letter-Box. The kind Father watches over us all alike, on islands and in the big cities, and He bids us love one another, especially on His birthday.”

A brother and a sister in the city! That news was almost more welcome than the box itself. If Kenneth and Rose could have seen those six little Prouts and have heard their squeals of joy when the box was unpacked,



they would have been glad indeed that they had remembered to be brotherly and sisterly.

The magazines which kept coming "ever and ever" and the books that were in that Christmas box were the beginning of the Island Public Library, of which every one is now so proud, and of many other good things which happened to the island and especially to the little Prouts.

For in summers after that they grew to know and to love their neighbors, the city children. Kenneth and Rose have been a good brother and sister to the little Prouts ever since; and it is as good a fortune for Kenneth and Rose as it is for the little Prouts.



**The Riverside Press**

*Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.  
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.*























**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00021207743

